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GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dissertation

A HISTORY OF THE METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

by

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INTRODUCTION

For more than forty years the Methodist Federation for Social Action has sought to apply the principles of Christianity to the problems of the social order. In pursuance of this task the organization has occasionally encountered much opposition. Recent accusations hurled at the Federation from both within and without the church have evoked controversy as to the raison d'être of the agency. What is being demanded at this time is a reappraisal of the value of the Federation to the denomination. Requisite to that evaluation is a knowledge of the history of the organization; more precisely, an understanding of the role that the Federation has played in the development of the social conscience of Methodism.

A. A Statement of the Problem

The Methodist Federation for Social Action is one of the denominational social-action groups raised up by the social gospel movement shortly after the turn of the century. Unlike the other groups, however, the Federation has maintained continuously an unofficial relationship to its denomination. The freedom of movement inherent in this status has enabled the agency to develop a radical program that at once sets it apart from the other denominational agencies. Moreover, the inspirational, non-executive function germane to its unofficial capacity has empowered

the Federation to exert an influence upon the church that has helped immeasurably to procure for Methodism the reputation of being the denomination most influential in promoting the social gospel in America. It is the purpose of this investigation to indicate the significance of these distinctive characteristics of the Federation both for Methodism and for American Protestantism generally.

B. Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

The investigation falls quite naturally into three sections. Part I presents an historical background of social thought and action in Methodism against which to view the organization of the Federation. It traces the social forces operative in the founding of the Federation in 1907: the social impact of John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival, the industrialization of America following the Civil War, and the maturity of the social gospel movement about the turn of the century. Part II treats the development of the periodic emphases of the Federation in the light of the changing historical situation and the teachings of Jesus. Part III implements these historical findings to support the thesis of the uniqueness of the Federation and indicates the significance of its distinctiveness both for the church and for society generally.

C. A Review of Previous Investigations of the Problem

Apart from occasional promotional pamphlets, no history of the Methodist Federation has ever been written. Two studies have been uncovered, however, in which the Federation has indirectly come under consideration. The first was prepared as a dissertation for an A.M. degree at Columbia University in 1929 by Charles C. Webber entitled The Conflict between the Methodist Book Concern and the International Typographical Union and its Sequel. Webber's work has a bearing on the present study insofar as it treats the role played by the Methodist Federation as mediator in adjusting the labor dispute between the union and the Methodist Book Concern from 1908 to 1929. The problem considered was approached from the perspective of the four groups involved in the conflict: the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Book Concern, the International Typographical Union, and the Methodist Federation. Webber, an active member of the Federation during most of the period under discussion and a representative of the Federation in its mediatory efforts in the labor dispute, presents a well-documented account of the historical activities of the Federation relating to the settling of the controversy. It is recommended as a praiseworthy supplement to this study. The interest of the Federation in this labor issue dates back to its origin and has been the subject of much controversy

within the church ever since.

The other study was a dissertation prepared for an S.T.D. degree at Temple University in 1945 by Hillman T. Williams entitled The Methodist Episcopal Church and Industrial Reconstruction, 1908-1939. The purpose of the study was to record the achievement of the Methodist Episcopal Church in developing a social consciousness within its membership. More directly, it attempted to demonstrate that the Methodist Church has always had a message for the laboring classes and has always been interested in the social betterment of the working people. Chapter VII, "The Methodist Federation for Social Service," deals with the contribution of the agency to the development of social concern within the church. The author contended that initially social action was officially endorsed by the church largely as a result of the efforts of the Federation. Testimony was made relating to the early socializing efforts of the organization and the recognition given for the same by the various General Conferences up to 1924. Implicit references to the influence of the Federation in the development of a social consciousness within several Annual Conferences and seminaries of the church made in other chapters of Williams' study are especially pertinent for this investigation and have been incorporated in the last chapter dealing with the Federation as a stimulus of the social conscience of the church.

D. A Statement of the Sources of Data

Since no one has heretofore attempted a continuous historical treatment of the development of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, the major task of this investigation has been one of organizing and interpreting chronologically and coherently the loosely-organized and incomplete historical data of the organization. The author has had to rely upon four major sources for his data: unclassified historical documents found in the office of the organization, back numbers of the periodical of the Federation, minutes of meetings of its executive bodies, and personal and written communications with persons directly associated with the leadership of the organization since its founding. The last-named source has been invaluable, not only because of the perspective it afforded but also because of the incompleteness of the other sources. In several places individuals connected with the organization through the years have been able to supply valuable documents not contained in the files of the agency. In other places literature issued without statements of authorship or date of publication, particularly the early promotional and educational pamphlets, have been identified. Wherever possible such data have been supplied by former members of the staff.

E. Acknowledgements of Indebtedness

The number and quality of the author's obligations to those who have aided in the preparation of this investigation are evidence of the cooperative nature of the project. Acknowledgement should be made of rewarding consultations with former members of the staff of the organization including Harry F. Ward, Wade C. Barclay, Winifred L. Chappell, and Worth M. Tippy. Profound indebtedness is due also to Bishops Francis J. McConnell, Lewis O. Hartman, Herbert Welch, and G. Bromley Oxnam for their suggestions. Many and varied courtesies have been extended by the General Theological Library of Boston, the office of the Federation, and the Methodist Historical Society in New York City.

PART ONE

THE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF METHODISM PRIOR TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERATION

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF METHODISM BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

The Methodist Federation for Social Action¹ was organized at a time when the validity of the social gospel itself was still being hotly debated by a majority of the membership of the church. In pursuance of their task of stimulating a wide study of social questions within their church the members of the Federation received spiritual strength from the conviction that their social passion was a legitimate birthright bequeathed them by the founder of their church, John Wesley. That early Methodism committed to its heirs a social concern was an advantage enjoyed by the leaders of the Federation in presenting their case.

This awareness of the "sociological reality" of Methodism, as one writer calls it,² is ever-present throughout the history of the Federation, and social Methodism in general, and would therefore seem to justify an introductory chapter dealing with the social dimensions of John Wesley and early Methodism in England and America.

At the Conference on Organization of the Federation in 1907, J. W. Magruder pointed out that the first great

1. Until 1948 the Federation was known as the Methodist Federation for Social Service.

2. Walter G. Muelder, "Methodism's Contribution to Social Reform," in MET, 205.

service of the group was to be the arousing of the church to its social obligation and recalled that it was Wesley who was the "progenitor" of modern social service, "giving to the Church a social heritage."³ Writing a few years later, Worth M. Tippy, one of the founding fathers of the Federation, stated that Wesley and his associates were "keenly alive to public social questions" and "undertook and initiated almost every form of modern social work." He commented:⁴

What a heritage is that to the Methodism of today! It must be startling to one who believes that ministers and churches should save souls only, and that social service is not a part of the gospel, to know that the founder of Methodism gave social service a place secondary only to evangelism...

So it was that Robert L. Tucker, in a pamphlet commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Federation in 1928, was able to reflect:⁵

When this self-same spirit (of early Methodist social pioneering) continued to articulate itself through the Federation for Social Service, it found itself in a soil quite indigenous to the Methodist genius.

Today the social mission of Methodism inherited from its founder is officially acknowledged by the church. As a matter of fact, the current statement of the Social Creed

3. Minutes, December 3, 1907.

4. MCW, 15-16.

5. In ATY, 14. A reprint of an article in The Advocates, April 19, 1928.

of Methodism, which in its original form was the creation of Federation members, is introduced in the Discipline of 1948 with this sentence:⁶

The interest of the Methodist Church in social welfare springs from the labors of John Wesley who ministered to the physical, intellectual, and social needs of the people to whom he preached the gospel of personal redemption.

Let us begin, then, our study of the Federation for Social Action by examining the social activities of the founder of Methodism and of early Methodism in America as well.

A. Evidences of Social Concern in Wesley's Ministry

Because John Wesley emphasized evangelism and sought to bring men to God through personal redemption, it has often been assumed that he had no interest in social questions and no understanding of worldly affairs. Because he was politically a Tory, it has often been assumed that he was not concerned about the social welfare of the poor. Because he was an arch-patriot and condemned the colonial revolt of the War for Independence, it has often been assumed that he was not interested in the issue of freedom.

To be sure, Wesley was first of all a religious evangelist, but he also displayed a zeal for franchise reform, for the abolition of slavery, and for the prohibition

6. P. 582.

of the liquor traffic, not merely because of the intemperateness involved but also because of the shortage of food resulting from its consumption of grain. Wesley was politically a Tory, but the church he founded was a church of the poor, for, as Richard Niebuhr points out, "the disinherited classes furnished the material for the Methodist revival."⁷ Wesley was opposed to the action of the colonies in the War for Independence, but he was nonetheless a lover of liberty. In fact, he saw both the problems of liquor and slavery as but aspects of the larger issue of freedom, viewing liberty in the Locke and Jefferson sense of natural justice as "the right of every human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air."⁸

Some of the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the question of the personal and social emphases of Wesley can be eradicated by calling attention to the answer given to his own question on this matter at the first Methodist Conference convened in London in 1744: "What may we reasonably believe to be God's design, in raising up the preachers called Methodists?" In disclosing this information, Wade C. Barclay points out that after four days of consideration of this question, this answer was agreed upon: "To reform the nation, more particularly the Church; to spread scriptural

7. SSD, 59.

8. See Muelder, op. cit., 194-195.

holiness over the land."⁹

"Holiness" for Wesley was not strictly a self-centered, other-worldly concern of the individual. As Muelder observes, "Holiness was linked with social responsibility."¹⁰ Indicative of Wesley's meaning of holiness is his reference to it in his sermon, "On Riches," in which he warns, in speaking on the difficulty of a rich man's entering the Kingdom:¹¹

...By a rich man here is meant...any one that possesses more than the necessities and conveniences of life. One that has food and raiment sufficient for his family, and something over, is rich....Such are the hindrances to holiness...which surround him on every side.

More emphatically in the Preface to the first Methodist Hymn Book of 1739 he wrote: "The Gospel of Christ knows no religion but social, no holiness but social holiness."¹² Parenthetically, it is instructive to note that the Federation for Social Action observed this conception of holiness from the start. Frank Mason North, another of its founding fathers, speaking at a Federation-sponsored conference in 1908 said, in dramatically outlining the function of the city pastor:¹³

9. Quoted in MAR, 1.

10. Op. cit., 196.

11. In WJW, Volume VII, 207.

12. In PWW, Volume I, xxii.

13. "The Socialized Church," in SOC, 252-253.

Tell him (the city pastor) to 'spread scriptural holiness throughout the land,' and he will be apt to reply, 'Yes, in God's name, let us find bread for the hungry, and clothes for the naked, and work for the idle, and water for the filthy, and living places for the families, and schools for the children.'

That is the version of the gospel Wesley and his associates preached and practiced. While still at Oxford, they went to the Bishop of Oxford and requested permission to visit the inmates of the parish workhouse and the prisoners in the Castle. They began to economize and to use all the money they received above expenses, and all they could get from people who became interested in their work, to provide for the necessities of prisoners, to free those who were imprisoned for small debts, to provide food, clothing, and shelter for poor people whom they discovered, and to provide for the religious education of their children. Wesley and his associates preached in the Castle and workhouse and prayed with prisoners who were condemned to die. It is evident that they had read the parable of the good Samaritan and the twenty-fifth chapter of Saint Matthew.

Later in his ministry Wesley built schools, orphanages, old folks' homes, and dispensaries for the care of the sick. In periods of unemployment he even went the length of establishing factories in which to give the people work. He set up a remarkably modern system of poor

relief based on investigation, case work, medical care, care of children, and employment.

Sufficient for our purpose is the conclusion that Wesley and his associates ministered to the whole of man, his social as well as his personal needs. As John Wesley Bready affirms summarily in his dramatic study of the Wesleyan movement:¹⁴

To him (Wesley) religion was the be-all and end-all of life, and to exclude it from any department of human affairs was to maim and deform it... 'Christianity,' he continually taught, 'is essentially a social religion,' and 'to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it.'

B. The Social Impact of the Evangelical Revival Upon England

With such a gospel as that whirling at the center of the evangelical hurricane which swept England in Wesley's day, it is not surprising to discover that the revival he had propagated had its social ramifications. While one must move cautiously whenever weighing claims of influence, a before-and-after look at England with respect to the Evangelical Revival leaves little doubt that something had happened to her.

Prior to the Revival England had become spiritually anemic. Montesquieu reported in 1731 that among cultured

14. Op. cit., 118. Wesley quoted from WJW, Volume V, 296.

Englishmen, "There was no such thing as religion. If anyone spoke of it, everybody laughed."¹⁵ Similarly, Bishop Butler lamented during the same period that among "all people of discernment" it was "taken for granted that Christianity was "fictitious" and had become "a principle subject of mirth and ridicule."¹⁶ At the other end of the social ladder the religious situation was no better; for, as Ernst Troeltsch discloses, "under the influence of an 'enlightened' Church and the pressure of industrial capitalism" the masses had become "indifferent, dull, and coarse."¹⁷

As we intimated earlier, Wesley and his associates found their place among the latter group. Stressing adult conversion and ethical perfectionism, they gained their victories in the middle and lower classes, among the miners and the industrial masses. Troeltsch writes:¹⁸

To the middle and lower classes it (Methodism) brought a new sense of the sacredness of personality; it appealed to the popular imagination, and awakened a devotion which found expression in a most self-sacrificing charity.

Into the life of the masses, brutalized by the industrial system, the Evangelical Revival brought the impulse of personality and individuality, making "somebody" out of

15. Quoted in Bready, op. cit., 352.

16. Ibid.

17. STC, 721.

18. Op. cit., 724.

the most hopeless "nobodies," as Jack Lawson, M.P., has remarked.¹⁹ The consequence of the release of this principle of individuality among the Methodists was the Evangelical Revival which swept England with what has proved since to have been "the last great religious revolution of the disinherited in Christendom."²⁰

Designed or not, this respect for personality embodied in the Evangelical Revival stimulated the social organism of England and resulted in many socially beneficial changes. Niebuhr, while maintaining that Methodism was primarily a religious and not an ethical movement of the masses, agrees that the Revival had, in the main, the same significance for England that the Revolution had for France. He adds:²¹

Its (Methodism's) democratic character... had a marked influence upon the social order....After all Methodism largely represented the religious aspect of that great revolution which placed the individual at the center of things and so profoundly modified all existing institutions.

Although it cannot be argued that the many reforms of the nineteenth century in England were solely due to the Evangelical Revival, neither can it be denied that it played a significant part in effecting the changes.

It is not our aim here to trace the thread of

19. Quoted in Bready, op. cit., 276.

20. Niebuhr, op. cit., 72.

21. Ibid., 64-65.

influence of the Evangelical Revival throughout the various social reform programs of nineteenth-century England. Contributions in that regard have been made by such historians as J. R. Green, Elie Halévy, W. E. H. Lecky, C. G. Robertson, and G. M. Trevelyan whose findings have been incorporated by Bready into the study already quoted. Bready's study discloses the influence of early Methodism on Catholic emancipation, franchise reform, prison reform, the abolition of slavery, the development of creative social service, and, most notably, the new industrial legislation instigated by that "evangelical of evangelicals," the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, whose work has periodically been recalled by the Federation for Social Action in its handling of the labor issue. Rather, it has been our purpose to establish the point that Methodism in its origin made Christianity a persuasive leaven in the world of affairs.

The spurt of humanitarianism in England during the nineteenth century cannot be explained apart from the social ramifications of the Evangelical Revival which Methodism spearheaded. As Elie Halévy, the French historian, has pointed out, evangelical religion was the "moral cement" of nineteenth-century England and the only consistent explanation of the highest social and moral achievements of modern England.²²

22. See Bready, op. cit., 95.

C. The Social Perspective and Concern of American Methodism up to the Civil War

Turning from a consideration of the social perspective of early Methodism in England to that in America we discover immediately that the movement was profoundly influenced by the conditions of American life and in its social undertakings had to strike out in new directions. It was not a simple matter of transplanting English Methodism to America, for, among other things, the movement in England was largely centered in the industrialized areas whereas in America Methodism was confronted by an undeveloped country. Readjustment to its new environment commanded the attention of Methodism in the eighteenth century.

Prior to the westward movement of the frontier the social influence of Methodism was nil. Numerically, in the first place, the church was too small to exercise any measurable influence. At the opening of the Revolution it claimed only 3,148 adherents, of whom only 764 were north of Mason and Dixon's line. Congregationalism was too strongly entrenched in New England and Presbyterianism in the Middle Colonies, and both of these sections were too unsympathetic with the doctrinal tenets and organizational system of Methodism to enable it to get more than a toehold

in those areas.²³

Moreover, early Methodism in America was ineffective socially because, prior to its organization in 1784, the church had no corporate existence. Preceding its organization every circle of Methodists was a law unto itself. As Barclay declares:²⁴

...As a whole the people called Methodists cannot be said to have had a common mind or voice. Their sense of social responsibility was inchoate and diffused.

No sooner had the church organized, however, than a sense of corporate social responsibility began to develop. As in England forty years earlier the Methodist preachers here also adopted as God's design for them the statement: To reform the continent, and to spread scriptural holiness over these lands. Barclay continues:²⁵

Leaders of the church began to consider how more effective expression could be given to social ideals. In attitude and preaching they challenged the European tradition of aristocracy based upon birth, social prestige, and property. They refused deference to the class distinctions which had prevailed in colonial society in opposition to the stratification which divided society into higher-class and lower-class people.

It was this belief in man's utter equality before God that was to clear the path for Methodism in the westward movement of the frontier. On the basis of such testimony we

23. See Sweet, MAH, 65f.

24. Op. cit., 2.

25. Ibid., 3.

St. Louis, Mo., June 22

My dear Mr. Brewster: I have just received your letter of the 19th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well. I am well at present, but I am not feeling very strong. I am not sure that I shall be able to go to the West this year. I am not sure that I shall be able to go to the West this year.

Very truly yours,
Wm. Brewster

I have just received your letter of the 19th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well. I am well at present, but I am not feeling very strong. I am not sure that I shall be able to go to the West this year. I am not sure that I shall be able to go to the West this year.

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Very truly yours,
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would seem justified in concluding that while American Methodism lacked any measurable social influence in this early period, its sense of social responsibility was still alive.

A worse blunder could hardly be made than to assume that because of the emotional flavor accompanying the early spread of Methodism in America its preachers were interested solely in the arousing of feeling for its own sake, or even in mere slavish adherence to stiff, puritanical codes of conduct. To be sure, the circuit-rider group insisted upon a genuine religious experience, but its genuineness was to be attested to by conformity with the General Rules of the church which were applicable to both the preachers and laymen. Barclay's study discloses that Methodists were a despised and persecuted group in some communities because they observed the General Rules which in various particulars possessed an essentially social content, such as this one taken from the first edition of the Discipline:²⁶

How little brotherly love (is there among us?)... To instance only one or two particulars: who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling? Particularly in selling horses? Write him Knave that does not. And the Methodist-Knave is the worst of all Knaves... Do not affect the Gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a Dancing-master. A preacher of the Gospel is the Servant of all... Let all our Chapels be built plain and decent;

26. Quoted in ibid., 4-5.

but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable: Otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist-Discipline, if not Doctrine too.

The profound implications in such provisions for the reforming of the nation exhibit a sound social instinct.

Inspired by that gospel, the circuit riders turned toward the poor to seek and save that which was lost. We "must suffer with if we labor for the poor" wrote Asbury, and they did.²⁷ In fact, they died from it. One study states, "Had there been insurance companies in those days, no Methodist itinerant could have secured protection..."²⁸ The sharing of the suffering, and its consequences, of their people by the circuit riders is indicative of their social concern.

This insistence upon the identification of the circuit rider with those whom he served was but one aspect of the broader conviction of Methodism which turned out to be its most effective quality along the frontier; namely, as intimated earlier, its belief in the common humanity of man. It was this expression of man's common humanity in its concern for the poor and its identification of its preachers with the people whom they served that made Methodism, above all the other denominations, the frontier

27. Quoted in ibid., 6.

28. Luccock and Hutchinson, SOM, 229.

church. Niebuhr draws that conclusion in suggesting that it was by virtue of the "affinity" between its nature as a religious movement of the poor and the similar movement of the frontier that made the advancing western settlements "congenial soil" for Methodism's growth.²⁹ He further adds:³⁰

It was not the least of Methodism's advantages on the border that its missionaries were distinguished in no way from the people with whom they dealt, save in the fervor of their piety and in the purity of their lives.

Summarily, as Sweet asserts, the emphasis of the circuit riders upon "the equality of all men in the sight of God" as they crossed the Alleghenies proved to be the "democratic gospel" of the democratic westward movement.³¹ In one sense, we might say, the church "created the frontier spirit of which, in another sense, it was the child."³²

Did the almost complete victory over the older denominations along the frontier enable Methodism to exercise the social influence it was too weak to exercise along the eastern seaboard? Once again, in all fairness to the aggressive itinerant preachers of that day, we must answer that the direction of their emphases, individual and social, was determined by the new social situation in which they

29. Op. cit., 165-166.

30. Ibid., 172.

31. Op. cit., 149.

32. Niebuhr, op. cit., 177.

found themselves. Indubitably, many of these early preachers were men of limited social perspective. They failed to perceive that the sins of the people whom they sought to save were an intrinsic part of the society of which they themselves were members and by which they were likewise conditioned. To expect them to have proceeded to create a social order on the basis of ideologies and knowledge which did not then exist would be anachronistic.

At the close of the War of 1812 the nation found itself in an age of restlessness and change; people moving westward, industrial towns springing up on the coast, and everywhere there was road building and canal digging. Politically, the frontier area west of the Alleghenies was becoming increasingly important and the new democracy arising there was soon to place Andrew Jackson in the Presidency. As Methodism extended into this expanding frontier, its preachers were soon brought face to face with the distressing moral conditions common to new and rude communities: drinking, fighting, rowdyism, gambling, and lawlessness. All restraint was thrust aside. As Sweet discloses:³³

People from the East, traveling in the West, were often 'terrified at the drunkenness, the vice, the gambling, the brutal fights, the gouging, the needless duels they beheld on every hand.'

33. Op. cit., 170.

So it was that the sin-sensitive itinerant preacher, confronted with this situation, did what he would be expected to do; he warred upon the sins close at hand.

Beyond question, the one vice upon which Methodism is commonly credited with having poured its wrath was drinking. The Methodist zeal for temperance reform stems from the Wesleyan tradition of opposition to the manufacture and use of "spiritous liquors," but it did not germinate perceivably in America until the period under discussion. During the colonial period of our history the use of intoxicating liquors was taken for granted. Among religious people, including the laymen and clergy of Methodism, as among the non-religious, hardly any moral stigma was attached to drinking. It was during the period of the expanding frontier of the early decades of the nineteenth century, when undisciplined drinking became obviously a matter of great concern in the restraint-free frontier towns, that the temperance reform movement assumed the proportions of a nationwide crusade. The story of Methodism's struggle with the problem of alcohol, within and without the church, during this period is told in a closely-documented section of Barclay's study entitled, "The Temperance Reform Movement."³⁴

By and large, the Methodist Church during the nineteenth century centered its attention of necessity upon the

34. Op. cit., 41-61.

internal problems created by a rapidly-growing church. This historical development is aptly portrayed by Sweet in his chapter, "Keeping Pace with the Westward March."³⁵ New church institutions had to be established to meet the new needs: educational institutions had to be built; a missionary society had to be organized; a church periodical had to be published. Within the church, moreover, reform measures were being agitated by a growing number of both laymen and clergy. The rising tide of democracy along the frontier manifested itself within the church in the agitation for the election of presiding elders and the representation of laymen and local preachers in the General Conference. In this sense, indeed, Methodism had become the child of the frontier spirit it had helped to create.

For the most part, the emphasis of Methodism without the church during the march to the Mississippi was primarily evangelical, but initially this was a matter of emphasis in teaching and did not necessarily deter it from participating in the various reform movements of that period. Initially, for example, Asbury and his followers, while not possessing the social spirit and vision of Wesley, were nonetheless alert to the evil of slavery and the need of education, both of which were unpopular opinions to hold in that day. The evangelism stressed by those early itinerants was an ethical

35. Op. cit., 161-185.

one founded in a gospel of brotherhood, not a theological one based on ecclesiastical dogmas. It was not until the church became aware of its increasing size and success that the latter type of evangelism began to be emphasized.

The slavery issue illustrates this change of emphasis. As Niebuhr relates, slavery was denounced vigorously by Methodism through the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but after that, officially, its anti-slavery agitation was gradually relaxed.³⁶ Within a few years, by 1832, we find the development of a church-consciousness within Methodism and of cotton as "king" in the south where the church was strong accompanied by the muzzling of the abolitionists and all "radicalism" within the church at General Conference.³⁷ The proceedings of the General Conferences between 1832 and 1844 would seem to indicate increasingly the desire to "maintain peace at the expense of principle," to borrow Niebuhr's phrase.³⁸ Sweet contends, in fact, that when the schism finally occurred in 1844, it came out of a dispute in which "the real issue, slavery, fell into the background, while its legal and constitutional phases became prominent."³⁹ At any rate,

36. Op. cit., 191f.

37. See Sweet, op. cit., 235ff.

38. Op. cit., 24.

39. Op. cit., 246-247. For a fuller treatment of this issue see Chapter XII, "Slavery Controversy and Schism," 229-253.

it is apparent that after 1844, and to an even greater degree after the Civil War which followed, Methodism was weighted down with additional profound internal problems as a consequence of the schism. Its social voice became weaker and weaker.

To the fore came an overwhelming emphasis on individualistic evangelism directed at the rural masses, which resulted in an apathy of Methodism's social sensitivity. Methodism was not to awaken from its social stupor until the twentieth century, and when it did awaken, like Rip Van Winkle, it found itself in a strange world. America had become urbanized and industrialized.

CHAPTER II

IMPACT OF THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF POST-CIVIL WAR AMERICA UPON PROTESTANTISM

The role that the Methodist Federation for Social Action has played in the development of social Christianity within Methodism, and Protestantism in general, cannot be understood apart from a knowledge of the socio-economic history of the country after the Civil War and the resultant rise of the social gospel movement during the same period. The last part of the century saw America transformed from a predominantly agrarian to an industrialized and urbanized culture. It is the purpose of this chapter to point out the significance of that transformation for American Protestantism.

Thomas Jefferson, the agrarian-loving democrat, would have been astounded at the transformation which shook American culture from bow to stern during the last half of the nineteenth century. No one event could explain the change. Jeffersonian democracy was deluged by the convergence of many streams: the uprooting of race and class distinctions in the south, the rush of occupation of the west, the aggregation of the natural resources by private interests and the disappearance of free land for farming families, the buccaneering orgy of predatory commercialism which created the "captains of industry," and the judicial "personalization" of corporate enterprise. The slack frontier freedoms of the

pre-war period were stripped away and replaced by the routine of the factory. By 1893, the Beards state, the homesteader's America had vanished forever:¹

An epoch of nearly three hundred years had closed. The 'escape valve' through which millions from the old East and from Europe had moved from poverty and unemployment to home-owning and independence on the frontier was shut. One sensational phase of economic enterprise in America was at an end.

And with it went the hope of fulfillment of the democracy of Jefferson, the state of political equalitarianism, which had been crudely practiced in the Jacksonian era. "Thenceforward," in the words of Vernon L. Parrington, "the drift was increasingly toward concentration."² Monopolistic industrialism, which by 1890 had necessitated the enactment of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, replaced agrarianism as the dominant note of American culture.

A. The Manifestations of Industrialization

Probably the most obvious manifestation of the industrialization of the nation was what Parrington might have chosen to call the "concentration of population," the urbanization of America. During the 1880's Chicago increased its population over one hundred per cent, the Twin Cities trebled in size, and the Atlantic Coast became

1. BHU, 294.

2. MCA, Volume III, 189.

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firmly cast in the urban mold, with New York enclosing a million and a half in population, Philadelphia a million, and Boston, Baltimore, and Washington D.C. about a half a million each.³ Immigration from southern Europe, as well as from surrounding farms, accounted for a large part of this growth. This mushrooming of large cities destroyed the almost undisputed supremacy of the rural regions that had characterized pre-Civil War America and in so doing challenged urban Protestantism severely.

Another manifestation of American industrialization was the concentration of wealth made possible through the centralization of manufacturing, finance, and transportation by means of mergers, pools, and incorporation. By 1890 one third of one per cent of the population controlled more than one half of the national wealth, a sum of seventy-eight and one half billions of dollars, which had grown from sixteen billions in 1860.⁴ A concise description of the process whereby this wealth was accumulated and became lodged in the coffers of the Morgans, Carnegies, and Rockefellers is aptly presented by the Beards.⁵

At the same time, as Hopkins discloses in the reference above, real wages, never above a bare subsistence level, had declined from an average of four hundred to

3. See C. H. Hopkins, RSG, 99.

4. Ibid., 79.

5. Op. cit., 303-11.

three hundred dollars, forcing women and children into the factories beside the men. In the course of this process the industrial worker gradually became aware of his inability to bargain "equally" -- under "freedom of contract" -- with a million-dollar corporation. His response to this situation evolved into another form of concentration. "United we stand; divided we fall" became his motto, which he expressed by joining with other industrial workers to form unions in an effort to establish a "fair balance" in wage negotiations. Initially this trend germinated in the Knights of Labor movement and eventually resulted in the organization of the American Federation of Labor, which, beginning with a membership of 150,000 in 1886, soon doubled it and by 1904 reported a membership of 1,670,000 workers.⁶ Also growing in numbers and strength were other independent unions and the four railroad brotherhoods.

B. Impact of Industrialization Upon Protestantism

The consequences of this transformation of American culture for Protestantism cannot be overestimated. In rural America the church was the most important social tie in the lives of men and women, a tie which fostered a spirit of community, of friendly intercourse. But in urbanized America, the church found it difficult to nourish that spirit. The

6. Ibid., 315.

church became only one among many competing social interests. It had to operate, not as before in a small homogeneous community, but in a highly transient and heterogeneous one. Crowded by unassimilable aliens and tenements and beset on all sides with lawlessness, delinquency, and crooked politics, Protestantism, for the most part, soon found itself on the periphery of interests of the urban masses.

While intellectually and technologically the city was thought to be synonymous with progress, morally it was "the hot-house of every cancerous growth."⁷ Charles Stelzle, designating the city as the focal point of modern industrial society, poignantly entitled his study of the urban problem, Christianity's Storm Center, and in a few terse phrases portrayed the challenge confronting the church in that hour:⁸

The filthy slum, the dark tenement, the unsanitary factory, the long hours of toil, the lack of a living wage, the back-breaking labor, the inability to pay necessary doctor's bills in time of sickness, the poor and insufficient food, the lack of leisure, the swift approach of old age, the dismal future, -- these weigh down the hearts and lives of vast multitudes in our cities. Many have almost forgotten how to smile...their souls -- their ethical souls -- are all but lost. No hell in the future can be worse to them than the hell in which they now are...

Prior to 1880, in a spirit of good-natured apathy, Protestantism tolerated the urban problem. By and large,

7. Aaron Abell, UID, 3.

8. P. 22.

it subscribed to the philosophy of laissez-faire individualism which characterized the culture of which it was a part. Spencerians, the majority of churchmen believed that the pitiable conditions described above were the unfortunate result of the Darwinian struggle for life. In this struggle, they would contend, the unfit became the unfortunate. The poor were the lazy. Poverty was admittedly regrettable and should be alleviated by Christian charity, but nothing vital could be done to remove it, the "natural balance" in society being what it was. Functionally, as Merle Curti has expressed it:⁹

The Protestant pulpit, generally supported by the well-to-do, largely ignored the squalor and misery of the dwellers in tenements and preached a gospel with little meaning to sweatshop workers.

The general response of Protestantism to the urban problem was to retreat up town close upon the heels of the prosperous. Even the religions of the poor, Abell discloses, "displayed almost frantic solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the rich."¹⁰

Fermenting within Protestantism during this period, however, was a minority attitude, one of humanitarian protest, which accepted the challenge of the city. In contrast to the majority opinion, the members of this group denied that the gross inequalities of wealth, signifying poverty,

9. GAT, 539.

10. Op. cit., 4.

were decreed by any iron law of nature; that riches are but the reward of personal thrift and industry; that the poverty of the masses is merely the result of indolence and improvidence, much less, drunkenness. Positively, supporters of this opinion, such as Theodore Parker, Stephen Colwell, and Washington Gladden, suspected that social ills had their origins in the methods of modern industry, poor conditions of labor and living, and other adverse factors that could be removed or prevented by peaceful means of group and public action. Intensely interested in the welfare of human beings, this group of thinkers spearheaded the social gospel movement which came to life in the eighties.

Social historians, such as Gabriel, Curti, Dombrowski, and Hopkins, are in general agreement that the social gospel movement was the religious part of a broader humanitarian, melioristic protest against modern industrial society. Typically, Hopkins concludes his study with the statement:¹¹

...The social gospel was the reaction of Protestantism... to the ethics and practices of capitalism as brought to point in the industrial situation.

The "industrial situation" to which Hopkins referred was the increasing amount of industrial conflict after 1880, occasioned by the power-struggle between industry and labor which ensued as a consequence of the concentration process

11. Op. cit., 319.

considered earlier in this study. As the economic position of the industrialists improved and the living conditions of the workers retrogressed, tension between the two groups increased. Beginning in 1877 with the railroad employees, strikes became the order of the day and continued through the Great Upheaval of 1884-86 and the Homestead and the Pullman troubles of the early nineties. One of the consequences of this industrial warfare was the development of an admirable degree of working-class solidarity, a new social institution to compete with the church for the loyalty of men, as it were.

Increasingly, during this period of conflict, the labor movement became Protestantism's "thorn in the flesh." Many labor leaders professed to be followers of Jesus but at the same time openly disavowed "churchianity." Their scorn of ecclesiastical religion had several sources. First, they considered the preacher's plea for brotherhood to be hypocritical, since it was offered usually in the guise of charity rather than economic justice, charity which to the laborer was often unearned increment collected at his expense. Also, then as now, the church was accused of standing for justice in general but not in the specific. Of course, an obvious source of contempt was the failure of Protestantism to take the side of the worker in any one of the major industrial disputes throughout the nation.¹²

12. See James Dombrowski, EDC, 6.

Leaders of the labor movement, moreover, not only needed the church but also "stole its fire" by basing its appeal to the worker on the Christian principles of brotherhood and social justice. Having to choose between the acquiescence of the church and the militancy of labor in the face of the social strife, the industrial worker, in many cases, gave his loyalty to the labor movement. In fact, Abell informs us, so much of the worker's time and talents were devoted to his union that he "necessarily lost interest in the church."¹³

Gradually, beginning about 1880, Protestantism became alarmed at the widespread alienation of the laborer from the church. It began to heed the admonitions of its minority voice of humanitarians. Motivated by the anxious desire to arrest the alienation of labor, Protestantism began to search itself for its own shortcomings and to inquire into the causes of the social strife swirling about its doors. James Dombrowski credits, interestingly enough, the rivalry engendered in the struggle of the church to regain the loyalty of the worker as probably "the most important factor in the development of a social emphasis in American Christianity."¹⁴

Slowly through its seeking the church came to comprehend the dynamics underlying the sorry predicament of the

13. Op. cit., 10.

14. Op. cit., 3.

industrial worker and to sympathize with his struggle. So it happened that, after years of conflict, towards the close of the century Samuel Gompers, one of labor's most severe critics of Protestantism's social apathy, was willing to admit that ministers were "becoming more acquainted with us and no longer study to learn concerning us from our employers and superintendents."¹⁵

Besides the labor movement, another social current, world-wide in scope, that commanded the attention of Protestantism during the period under discussion and was instrumental in helping it reclaim its social voice, was the spread of socialism. Rejected outright by the church in the eighties as anarchy, socialism began to receive a new respect by the church in the nineties on account of its social principle. Hopkins has declared this dramatic change of attitude on the part of Protestantism to be "one of the outstanding facts" distinguishing the social gospel movement of the nineties from that of the previous decade. It was "an integral part of the striving of an age" coming to believe in social salvation and "to appreciate the significance of environment." The chief significance of socialism for the social gospel movement was the "stimulus" it provided for "the socializing of Christianity."¹⁶ Social Christianity, in turn, saw its obligation to socialism to

15. Quoted in Abell, op. cit., 252.

16. Op. cit., 171.

be its Christianization, rather than its eradication. From a socialism "thoroughly infused with Christian principles," Richard Ely pointed out, "there is nothing to fear."¹⁷

Thus it was that Protestantism, unavoidably enmeshed in the urban theater of operations of the social war of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, was set upon by the social forces of the new America and finally captured by the "religion of humanity," to borrow Ralph Gabriel's term,¹⁸ as expressed in the labor and socialist movements. In a period of confusion and conflict courageous Protestants rediscovered Christianity's social message and through the social gospel movement offered a revitalized Christianity as the way by which the nation should surmount the perils of anarchy and despotism besetting it. As Merle Curti has asserted:¹⁹

(The social gospel movement) must be regarded as one of the dominant ideas in the patterns of protest evoked by the advance of industrial capitalism. Indeed, no arguments against laissez-faire, private enterprise, and corporate wealth caused more concern to the champions of the existing order than those advanced in the name of Christ.

A new age was in the making. "The Social --We-- took its place beside the individual --I--."²⁰ Shortly after the turn of the century, Protestantism was to

17. Quoted in Abell, op. cit., 69.

18. CAD, 332.

19. Op. cit., 632.

20. Harold Rugg, "The Spirit of the Frontier," in WAS, 109.

acknowledge its social role in the appointment of official social-action commissions by the large denominations. Social Christianity, although still a minority movement, once again became a reality in American Protestantism.

C. Social Record of Methodism during this Period

Thus far in this chapter we have confined ourselves to a brief, theoretical sketch of the impact of industrialization upon American Protestantism in general. In this section we shall consider the effect of that cultural transformation upon American Methodism, more precisely, the Methodist Episcopal Church North; and in so doing we shall get a closer look at the social process by which Protestantism changed its attitude toward the social situation.

The close of the Civil War did not bring to an end the internal problems resulting from the schism within Methodism. Additional internal problems were heaped upon the church which distracted it still more from its social mission. For one thing, there was the problem of reclaiming the numerous churches abandoned in the south as the people fled before the advancing northern armies. Should those churches come under the jurisdiction of the northern or southern section of the Methodist Church? Another problem was the rehabilitation of the thousands of freedmen. Should they be absorbed by the northern church, remain in the southern church, or establish their own expression of

faith under some new administrative body? Lay representation within the General Conference of the church was another pressing problem before the church during this period. Those were a few of the trying issues which faced Methodism following the war and contributed to its social apathy.

Another important factor which delayed the awakening of Methodism to the cultural transformation in process during that period was the predominant rural character of its churches and the fertile soil that environment provided for the evangelistic phase of the Wesleyan gospel. Because of its remoteness from the urban setting of the new America, rural Methodism was at first unaware of the significance of the cultural transformation for Protestantism. When finally it alerted itself to the new social situation, its solution for the evils of city life was the same as that it advocated for the removal of the sins of the world in its rural habitat. The problem of redeeming the city was seen as essentially the personal and private matter of redeeming the individuals who lived in the city.

The social inertia of that traditional approach to the problem of "worldly" sin deterred Methodism considerably in regaining its social sensitivity. As Muelder has commented:²¹

21. "Methodism's Contribution to Social Reform," in MET, 205.

Methodism, due to its large rural constituency and the individualism of its evangelistic appeal, awoke more slowly to the stark realities of urbanism and industrialism than some of the other denominations.

It was held that the church should keep aloof from socio-economic matters and concentrate upon the preaching of abstract virtue and individual morality. Attempts to Christianize the social order were decried as being contrary to the belief in the coming of Christ. Salvation was regarded as a distinctly individual process and as having primarily a future reference. The objective of this individualistic religion was to save a person out of the world, with little effort toward saving the world itself by bringing its social institutions into conformity with the principles of Jesus.

Happily, during the last decade or so of the nineteenth century within Methodism, as within Protestantism as a whole, there appeared from out of the wilderness an occasional John the Baptist demanding that attention must be given to the application of religious teaching to social questions. This was not an entirely new idea. Rather, it was the "Methodist revival" of emphasis on elements in the teachings of Jesus which had been increasingly neglected within the church since the passing of John Wesley. This veritable social renaissance within Methodism sprang forth during the nineties and in its infancy, pioneered by a few

dynamic leaders, traversed the same course as that being traveled by the other large Protestant divisions.

Intermittently in the early nineties Zion's Herald and Methodist Review carried articles evidencing the re-awakening of Methodism to its social mission. Writing in the latter periodical in 1891, C. M. Morse pointed out that the church must "present the sociological doctrine of Jesus" if "social change" was to result. He stated that "individual regeneration alone was not enough." Because our social system "is grounded in custom" and accepted as "right and just," not "a single reform in the industrial or social world would result" if "every individual in the United States were regenerated in an hour." For him, true conversion required "an ethic of socialized religion."²²

Speaking a year earlier before the Jesse Lee Centennial in Boston on "Methodism and the Social Question," James M. King of New York revealed the breadth and depth of Methodism's social leaders of that period. He listed as the pertinent social questions of the day: (1) Science and Christian Sociology, (2) Remedial Appliances, (3) The Southern Race Question, (4) The Condition of Womanhood, (5) Marriage and Divorce, (6) Temperance and Prohibition, (7) Common and Higher Education, (8) The Problem of Wealth and the Laborer; (9) The Attitude of the Pulpit, and

22. November, 1891, 925.

(10) The Sovereign Remedy of All Abnormal Conditions. Criticizing Sumner's view of the non-ethical content of social science, King upheld in contrast the approach of the Christian sociologist, J. H. Stuckenberg. King reflected upon the relationship of Christianity to social science and concluded that social science was "the child of Christianity." With regard to the prophetic voice of Methodism, he feared that the church was "losing something of the fearlessness with which it once declared the Law of God," and was becoming "more and more cowardly" in the "presence of giant monopoly and money power." Urban Methodism was not meeting the social problem "of increasing wealth and its relation to the laborer who largely produced it." Nor was the church contributing its "legitimate part to the successful solution" of the social conditions of the cities in the light of its history, theology, and numbers. Methodism was not, to the extent it ought, "reaching the very people to whom we (Methodists) were originally sent." It was "among the common people," not the well-to-do, that "social problems were to be solved." Closing his address in this vein, King declared, "The leaven must be put to the lump, and not the crust." The entire address was reprinted in Zion's Herald.²³

Once the thinking of the Methodist social pioneer was grounded in sociological processes, the city began to receive

23. November 12, 1890, 362.

his attention. In the first of a series of articles in Zion's Herald on "Methodism in the Great Cities," W. Maslin Frysinger analyzed the reaction of Methodism in Baltimore to the new concentrations of population and concluded:²⁴

It was once the ambition of Baltimore Methodism to seek the lowest -- its chief ambition now seems to be to reach the highest. It has literally 'moved up town.' All of its chief centres of power are located among the habitations of wealth.

Instead of heroically holding its ground, Methodism in Baltimore responded to modern urbanization by ingloriously retreating up town. Other articles in the series merely reiterated the Baltimore response. James M. King, writing the article on New York City, summarized the Methodist situation in the large cities. He said:²⁵

We are not in any large sense as formerly reaching the poor. We have lost our hold on the very class to which we were originally sent.

One should not conclude, however, that the social pioneers were but "prophets of doom" for urban Methodism. They saw in the mushrooming cities a challenge as well as a threat. J. F. Chaffee, for one, saw in the great cities the challenge of a work which was "one of the greatest to which the Church is now called." Like others around him, he felt that "the city, as well as the world, must be the subject of redemption."²⁶

24. January 10, 1894, 9.

25. February 7, 1894, 42.

26. Methodist Review, January, 1906, 307.

The leadership of this Methodist movement to redeem the city fell to Frank Mason North, whom Herbert Welsh has designated as "perhaps the leading Methodist progressive of that period."²⁷ The life and thinking of North are indicative of the spirit of social Methodism that was developing in the last decade of the nineteenth century and was eventually to lead to the organization of the Methodist Federation for Social Service a decade later. As one of his young contemporaries has said of him:²⁸

He (North) was a major force in the social re-awakening of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in socializing our local churches, and in turning the thought of our churches to the plight of the tenement population of our cities. He was also a leader in the little group of creative men who were leading the Protestant churches of this country out of their deadly individualism into fellowship and united social action.

Born in New York City, Frank Mason North early learned of the social and religious needs of the great metropolis. After college he entered upon ministerial labors that brought him into close touch with the social currents and problems that confronted the churches of the rapidly growing northern section of Manhattan Island. Appointed Executive Secretary of the New York City Extension and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1892, he was in a position to observe the social

27. Letter to Hillman Williams, May 12, 1944. Quoted in MEC, 77.

28. Worth M. Tippy, FMN, 18.

significance for the church of the new America.

In 1891 North wrote a series of four articles for Zion's Herald on "The Christianity of Socialism."²⁹ They reveal the trends of the reading as well as the thinking of the liberal social Methodist of his day. The author was familiar with political economy and called attention to the departure of Richard Ely and J. B. Clark from the classical economy of England. He discussed Rousseau, Voltaire, Proudhon, Bakunin, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx. He was familiar with the Christian socialist movement of England and referred to the organization of the Christian Socialist Workingmen's Party in Germany. He had some advance information about the famous labor encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum," which was soon to be given to the Catholic Church. He treated the Christian Social Union of England and spoke of Mulford, Gladden, Munger, and Lyman Abbott in this country.

On the subject of socialism itself, North pointed out that both the objectives of socialism and its watchwords of liberty, equality, and fraternity are profoundly Christian. He felt that "the essential aims of Socialism and Christianity are identical" and flayed the selfishness, cruelties, and bitter hardships growing out of an individualistic society. He reproached the churches for their

29. The series was carried in Zion's Herald in four consecutive issues beginning with that of January 14, 1891.

lack of social vision and passion. He saw the distinction between the socialist and Christian to be this: "One seeks to improve character by better conditions; the other conditions by better character." But having said that, he analyzed the materialistic and atheistic trend of socialism from Rousseau to Marx and concluded that its spiritual ideology was far apart from that of Christianity, agreeing with Ely's position that socialism must be Christianized. Turning away from Marx, North allied himself with the Christian socialists of his own country, under the supreme authority of Jesus Christ. In this series of articles, North fused the social and spiritual passion and the technical knowledge and courageous faith that characterized the small group of social pioneers within Methodism and Protestantism during that day.

In another essay, "The City and the Kingdom," North designated the city as the supreme problem of civilization and Christianity. He asserted:³⁰

The city will test the Church and decide its competence. Has the Church a motive? The city will lay it bare. Has the Church a creed? The city will discover its working value. Has the Church traditions? The city will show whether they are vital or dead. Has the Church ideals and a program? The city will afford the demonstration. Does the Church represent Christ? The city will detect and declare.

For North, it was through the city, not over it, that the

30. In SMI, 315.

Kingdom must eventually come. So it was that, for social Methodism, the city came to mean for Christianity what the "world" once meant for religion; in the words of William J. Tucker, "something at once to be feared and loved, to be served and mastered."³¹

Having now this background of the re-awakening of social thinking within Methodism as typified in the personality of North, it is interesting and instructive for our purpose to follow through his participation in the development of social action by urban Methodism. By coincidence or intention, the social movements with which North was associated were the ones which marked the trend of progressive Methodism in the social gospel movement of the last decade of the nineteenth century. He founded and for twenty years edited The Christian City which, along with Methodist Review and Zion's Herald, spurred the institutional church movement within the church. As Executive Secretary of the New York City Church Extension and Missionary Society after 1892 for twenty years he worked valiantly with the social and religious problems of the slums of that great city. He served as one of the corresponding secretaries of the National City Evangelization Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church formed in 1892 which reached every great center of population in the nation. Equally

³¹. Quoted in Abell, op. cit., 254.

influential in the interdenominational field, he was one of three men who signed the call for the conference in 1894 which organized the Open and Institutional Church League, which aimed to make local churches community centers. Worth M. Tippy summarized the influence of North upon progressive Protestantism with the statement:³²

It can be truthfully said that, more than any other person, he (North) shaped the social policies of the Protestant churches of this country between 1892 and 1912. Rauschenbusch was the prophet, North the leader.

Let us look closer at these social movements which North promoted.

By the end of the eighties the institutional church movement was accepted by Methodism, as well as most of the large Protestant bodies, as a part of the church's religious mission. The early institutional churches resembled augmented rescue missions which had expanded and socialized their functions to cover the entire life of man. They re-adapted their structures, equipment, and program to meet the social and educational needs of their immediate neighborhoods. Their programs included a wide range of activities: kindergartens, day-nurseries, employment bureaus, dispensaries, diet kitchens, cooking schools, free libraries, gymnasiums, etc. One of the first was Wesley Chapel of Cincinnati under the leadership of J. W. Magruder. By 1895

32. Op. cit., 23-24.

its services included among other things a bureau of justice in which four lawyers gave their services to the poor and a building association in which people were taught to save to buy a home.³³ Perhaps more conspicuous was the Metropolitan Temple in New York City which was established by disbanding and consolidating several Methodist churches in the neighborhood. Its leader was the dynamic S. Parkes Cadman, who came from England with first-hand knowledge of the influential mission-hall movement of the Wesleyan Methodists in English slums. The Metropolitan Temple listed among its functions choral societies, an athletic association, a Froebel normal institute, a sewing school, and millinery and dressmaking classes. Its membership increased within five years from a hundred and fifty to eleven hundred.³⁴

Many of Methodism's institutional churches grew out of extension societies for consolidating the denomination in urban communities. The establishment of Metropolitan Temple was one of those projects. The extension societies were modeled after the Forward Movement of English Wesleyans which erected commodious houses of worship in slum sections.³⁵ The extension society in New York City, with which North was associated, listed forty-five enterprises

33. "An Institutional Church in Cincinnati," Outlook, November 2, 1895, 358.

34. Zion's Herald, January 5, 1898, 17-18.

35. Aggressive Methodism, III, November 1891, 9-10.

by 1900 on which it had expended over two and a half million dollars. Its ambitious program justified the comment that at least one denomination had not deserted the down-town section.³⁶ Between 1880 and 1900 nearly fifty of the city extension societies were founded in the various cities. Endorsing the movement in 1888, the bishops repeatedly supported the societies, declaring in 1896, for example:³⁷

Methodism in our cities should be slow to abandon what are called down-town populations because of changes from native to foreign, and rich to poor. The greater the change the more the need of our remaining. Combine the plants, if need be; adapt them and the services to the new surroundings but remain and save the people.

George P. Mains, one of Methodism's outstanding leaders of the institutional church movement, in an article in Methodist Review, disclosed that progressive Methodist opinion favored the institutional church as the only remedy for the urban problem.³⁸

To promote concurrent action on the part of all the city churches in the prosecution of mutual action-projects, the National City Evangelization Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in 1892. Functionally, this organization served as overseer of the institutional church movement. It evaluated, expanded, and financed the programs of the individual slum enterprises. Of particular interest

36. Outlook, October 13, 1894, 595.

37. GCJ, 1896, 60.

38. "The Church and the City," March, 1894, 221-37.

to this study was the insistence of the Union's leaders that the social sights of the institutional churches must be raised continuously. Along this line North pointed out that the urban form of poverty was not that delicate suffering described by some pious souls but rather "a crowding, brutalizing, crushing horror which makes one sneer at civilization and wonder if God has forgotten to be just." Poverty was one of many social evils which were "curable by law," and it was within the power of the church to promote that cure.³⁹ At the Union's seventh convention P. S. Merrill of Buffalo disclosed that, if poverty were to be alleviated, "you must put your finger on legislation and wealth and the more highly developed and refined citizenship." He added that the eradication of slum districts would "not be done altogether by direct evangelization."⁴⁰ As North reflected about the same time, the movement could no longer address itself only "to the founding and supporting of churches and Sunday schools, but to the larger ministry which social conditions are forcing upon it."⁴¹

In 1894 the Open and Institutional Church League was established to instrument the coordination of the institutional churches on an interdenominational basis as the Union was doing within the Methodist fold. Excepting for the

39. Zion's Herald, February 1, 1893, 36.

40. Zion's Herald, November 24, 1897, 753.

41. Christian City, January, 1897, 20-24.

Protestant Episcopal Church, most of the large Protestant divisions participated in the program. North and Mains were the Methodist representatives; North became the League's third president. As the representative of the church, the League stood for the redemption of a lost world and the fulfillment of Christ's spirit in life and service. In its platform the League pledged itself to work "to provide the material environment" through which the Christian spirit could be practically expressed. Through its institutional churches the League sought to represent Christ "physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually to the age in which it exists." It endeavored to make the institutional church "the leading part in every movement which has for its end the alleviation of human suffering, the elevation of man, and the betterment of the world." It aimed "to save all men and all of the man, by all means, abolishing so far as possible the distinction between the religious and secular."⁴² The Open and Institutional Church League was a potent factor in multiplying institutional churches and did much to induce Protestantism to adopt the social, as well as the personal, conception of religion.

By 1900, through the promotion of these various organizations, the institutional church movement had assumed

42. "The Platform of the Open and Institutional Church League," in C. B. Sanford, OHF, 397.

an important place in progressive Methodism. As to its significance for social Christianity, one can conclude confidently that it was a progressive step in comparison with the earlier approaches to the city problem. As the movement developed, it began to sense the importance of preventive philanthropy as over against the stress on remedial charity by the city missions. Moreover, it brought to bear the severe judgment of thoughtful churchmen on the social ethics of erecting aristocratic churches. Again, it succeeded not only in reaching the masses but also in promoting a program which helped to alleviate the alienation of the laboring class in the crises after 1880. Above all, the institutional church movement kept constantly before the church the vision of a Christianized society that was readily obtainable.

Many of the enthusiasts won to social Christianity through the institutional church movement were inspired by the confident belief that through its broadened program the church would shortly see the Christianization of society consummated. When this prospect failed to materialize, even "though only a minority of Protestants by 1900 excluded physical welfare from the church's mission," a sense of futility and defeatism weighed down many minds.⁴³ By the turn of the century the popularity of the institutional church began to wane. A study by the Department of Research and

43. Abell, op. cit., 252.

Education of the Federal Council of Churches has listed four factors which influenced that trend: (1) the community became more and more able to provide its own social and educational services; (2) the institutional church tended to become more of a secular institution than a church; (3) the Protestant churches often found themselves carrying on a heavy "activities" program in a Catholic immigrant neighborhood where the loaves and fishes were more impressive than the spiritual teaching of Christianity; and (4) the net result of such activities when not integrated with a continuing progressive program of religious education was negligible.⁴⁴

For these reasons the more progressive churchmen began to look elsewhere for a solution for the urban problem. Philanthropy could not do the work of social justice. The institutional church had improved human life, but socially it was inadequate. It dealt tenderly with needy individuals but, with few exceptions, ignored the conditions which brought those individuals to the place where they needed assistance. The social service of the future would be required to contribute more fully than formerly to the reconstruction of the social order. As Abell concludes his provocative study of the urban problem:⁴⁵

44. F. Ernest Johnson, editor, SWC, 37.

45. Op. cit., 255.

A more extensive social service, a keener sense of responsibility for the removal of industrial evils and, above all, a profoundly spiritual use of the agencies of social Christianity -- these must be the keys to religious success in the coming century.

This new insight into the broader mission of social Christianity mellowed in the hearts of a few Methodist progressives and finally gained expression shortly after the turn of the century in the founding of the Methodist Federation for Social Service.

CHAPTER III

ORIGIN OF THE METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

A. The Confluence of Social Forces

The Methodist Federation for Social Action did not spring full grown out of the consciousness of a little company of Methodist clergy. The organization was more the creation than the creator of the incipient social consciousness arising within the church. Its founding in 1907 represented the climax of that development in Methodism which came to pass at the close of the nineteenth century. The Federation was one of the social-service commissions appearing shortly after the turn of the century that marked "the full maturity" of the social gospel movement, as Hopkins has disclosed.¹

Into the organization of the Methodist Federation were gathered forces long working both inside and outside the church. Within the church we have already noted the social re-awakening of the denomination itself. Another factor was the application of the method of historical criticism to biblical documents. Another contributing factor was the increasing attention which was being given to the teachings of Jesus as well as the teachings about Jesus.

1. RSG, 280.

This enlightened "back to Jesus" movement disclosed the evolutionary quality of the ethical teaching of Jesus, and the prophets before him; teaching which was applicable to the contemporary social scene. The gospel once again became a guide to lead men out of the jungle of modern society, as it had been for the Wesleyans in their day.

Without the church the founding of the Federation was influenced by the common social movement that was coming to expression in American life at the close of the nineteenth century. We have traced the transition of America from an agrarian to an industrialized culture and have indicated its effect upon Protestantism. Problems grouped about factory and city produced acute needs. The necessity for social action on a large scale became of paramount importance. Concern about the social needs produced modern scientific charities, public and private; efforts to stamp out preventable diseases; tenement reform; institutions for dependents, delinquents and defectives; the establishment of public parks, playgrounds, and baths; legislation aimed at sweatshop and child labor; and strenuous efforts for the control of intemperance, prostitution, and gambling. But, nonetheless, the twentieth century dawned upon an America laid waste by the ravages of plutocratic greed. Charity had proved to be no match for the havoc wrought by unrestricted individualism. Passionate cries of protest and demands for

social justice sprang forth from the labor, socialist, and social-gospel groups.

During the first decade of the twentieth century this protest movement assumed the proportion of a popular crusade. Demands for social and political reform came from many directions and from prominent personalities. The literary protests of Brooks Adams, Henry George, Ida Tarbell, and H. D. Lloyd began to attract public attention. Theodore Roosevelt gloomily observed that the rich had grown richer and the poor poorer to a degree that threatened not only the prosperity but also the existence of the commonwealth. Even Andrew Carnegie regretfully demonstrated that greedy industrialists had acquired immense natural resources at nominal prices or for nothing. The life of William Jennings Bryan revealed dramatically the transformation of public opinion of that period. Cursed in 1896 as an anarchist, Bryan, that arch-critic of plutocracy, was to become the chief cabinet officer under Woodrow Wilson in 1912.²

It was during this period of progressive insurgency that the Methodist Federation for Social Action was born. It was thrown up by the same underlying forces, although it had an impetus older and deeper than most of them. Recalling that period in an article in The Christian Century, Harry F. Ward pointed out the similarity of the social pronouncements

2. For concise treatment of this development, see the Beards, BHU, Chapter XXIII, "Revolts against Plutocracy Grow," 374-92.

of the church, labor, socialism, the Popularist Party, and the national social work conference and interpreted it as an expression of a common movement in American life. He commented:³

It will at once be noticed that they (the pronouncements) focus upon the same points of deficit in human welfare and that they look in the same general directions for improvement, and at the same vital points of immediate necessity mention the same specific measures.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action was to take both direction from this common social movement in American life and instill it with the power of God as revealed in human life. The Federation, like the other social-service groups, was "the product of antecedent social forces," to borrow Dombrowski's phrase.⁴

In an essay written in 1908 the first president of the Federation, Herbert Welch, recognized the generality of the social movement that produced the Federation and the other social-service organizations. He singled out the establishment of the Wesleyan Union for Social Service in England in 1905 and the Department of Church and Labor in the Presbyterian Church in this country about the same time, with Charles Steirole as its head. Other denominations did likewise. All emphasized "the new feeling of need and of

3. April 19, 1928. Reprinted in ATY, 3.

4. EDC, vii.

determination to meet the obligation and opportunities of the present situation." To him the organization of the various commissions indicated the "stirring consciousness" within the churches of the "terrific responsibility" that was theirs in the face of the social need created by the corporate greed of that period.⁵

With the increasing aggregation of wealth and the accumulation of unimagined power in the hands of a few in the republic, progressive Methodists agreed that there was a greater need than ever before for the courageous utterance of a prophetic Christianity. For this purpose a special organization within the church seemed to be demanded. One of the first statements of the Federation justified its organization as follows:⁶

Such an organization offers an outlet for existing social enthusiasm; causes social workers to feel less lonely, and to connect their social labors with their church life; educates the conscience of the Church, helps to make the Church more largely and truly the servant of the community. It can gather information, point out needs and opportunities, stimulate energies, suggest and direct forms of service; it can afford a vital and vivifying center for the social spirit of the church.

Organized greed required organized effort to dispel it. To push this social evangelization of the church the Federation was organized.

5. In SOC, 21-22.

6. A flyer, "A Statement to the Church."

Administratively, the demand for organized effort was reflected in the numerous social pronouncements resounding throughout the church during this period. Nowhere is this development portrayed more graphically than in the introductory statement of the Minutes of the Federation. It reads:⁷

The conviction had for many years been taking shape in the minds of many that the Church should organize for this purpose (social service) but no one knew what his brother had in mind except in various ways the spirit that finally found expression in the Federation had been manifesting itself throughout the denomination. The adoption of memorials and resolutions by Annual and General Conferences; the statements of Episcopal addresses; the appointment of committees on social betterment and of delegates from ministerial meetings to labor unions; growing discussion of (sic) social question from the pulpits of Methodism and the increasing attention given to these subjects by the press of the church; the consciousness that the church had been losing its hold upon the masses; all these indicated the growth of a strong sentiment which must sooner or later lead to organized effort.

This was the plastic material out of which the Federation was to be carved. The work of the sculptor was to fall to a small group of men in the New York and Ohio areas.

7. P. 1. Quotations from the Minutes of the Federation in this study are taken from the bound volume for the period, 1907-1930, listed in the bibliography. Dates and page-references are supplied wherever available.

B. Roots of the Federation in New York and Ohio

It was within the New York East Conference that direction was initially given to that restless craving for organized effort which was showing itself throughout Methodism. In 1892 that body designated a special committee of five under the chairmanship of Frank Mason North, to present before the Conference a social service report for approval that could be forwarded to the General Conference of that year as a memorial. The report adopted considered the rights and correlative duties of property ownership and indicated an awareness of a developing social order that was giving emphasis to human brotherhood. It also gave approval to the principles of profit-sharing and cooperation in all practicable forms. As a memorial forwarded to the General Conference, the report called upon that body to present to the church an emphatic utterance on the issues it raised.⁸

Again in 1896 the New York East Conference requested this committee, with the addition of Herbert Welch and two others, to submit another memorial on social service for the General Conference. The committee presented an impressive report treating such subjects as the discontent of the poor, the right of property, socialistic tendencies, labor organization, combinations of capital, the ethics of business, the

8. Minutes of the New York East Conference, 1892, 31.

duties of property, the wage system, plutocracy in the church, the submerged classes, Christian citizenship, and the responsibilities of church and ministry to current social issues.⁹ Indeed, the report aptly reflected the problems of the industrialized and urbanized society besetting the church in that hour. The report was adopted by the Conference with deep conviction and memorialized for the General Conference. As Conference business, the matter was to rest there for the time being. The two-mentioned members of that committee, F. M. North and Herbert Welch, were to have important roles in bearing the Federation through its embryonic stage.

In Ohio, where he was then President of Ohio Wesleyan University, Herbert Welch discovered the social-service craving to be organized fermenting also. There in the winter of 1906 he encountered Elbert Robb Zaring, Assistant Editor of The Western Christian Advocate, and Worth M. Tippy, pastor of the Epworth Memorial Church in Cleveland. The three entered into correspondence concerning the forming of an organization for the Methodist Episcopal Church similar to that of the Wesleyan Methodist Union of Social Service in England. Welch was able to bring to the Ohioans the thinking of North and the other New York men on the subject.¹⁰ Meanwhile,

9. Ibid., 1896, 38.

10. Alson J. Smith, ASF, 2. Unless otherwise specified all pamphlets quoted are publications of the Methodist Federation for Social Action. Wherever available authors and dates of printing are supplied.

North had been corresponding with Harry F. Ward concerning a similar project. Ward was then the young pastor of the Union Avenue Methodist Church in Chicago, the "Stockyards Church," a settlement project aided by Northwestern University of Evanston, Illinois. The effort to organize was abandoned for the time being, until the autumn of 1907, pending the return of Worth M. Tippy from England. During June and July of that year Tippy traveled about England studying the Wesleyan Movement at first hand. One of the objects of the trip was to study the young Wesleyan Union for Social Service with the idea of organizing a similar agency in this country upon his return.

Referring to his trip, Tippy has said:¹¹

I met Rattenbury, Lofthouse, Gregory, Johnson, Mark Guy Pearse, and others. I studied the Leysian Mission in London, and the great Central Halls in Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Glasglow, and Belfast.

The Wesleyan Union was founded in 1904 largely through the inspirational leadership of S. E. Keeble, the Union's first President.¹² Tippy found the leaders of the movement deeply influenced by the settlement movement and the Salvation Army. They were in touch with the labor movement, many of whose

11. Letter to author, November 16, 1948.

12. For origin of the Wesleyan Union, see Chapter IV, "Men of Action," of an unpublished and untitled manuscript being prepared on the life of S. E. Keeble by Maldwyn Edwards, Superintendent of Birmingham Central Mission in England.

There are two fundamental principles in the construction of a good report. First, the report must be clear and concise. Second, the report must be accurate and reliable. The first principle is that the report must be clear and concise. This means that the report should be written in a simple and direct manner, using plain language and avoiding unnecessary details. The second principle is that the report must be accurate and reliable. This means that the information in the report must be based on facts and should be verified by the writer.

It is important to remember that a report is a document that is used to communicate information. Therefore, it is essential that the report be written in a way that is easy to understand and that it contains the information that is needed to make a decision.

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the results of the study. The study was conducted in order to determine the effect of the treatment on the patients. The results of the study are as follows:

The results of the study show that the treatment had a significant effect on the patients. The patients who received the treatment showed a significant improvement in their condition compared to the control group.

leaders were Wesleyans. Most of the Union men worked in the Central Halls in the hearts of the great cities of England, Scotland, and Ireland. These Halls were religious social centers with an emphasis on evangelism. They were actively involved in the struggle which was going on in England for the total welfare of the working masses of the people. One of its aims was to socialize the thinking and work of the Wesleyan churches.¹³

On returning from England Tippy stopped off in New York for a conference with North whom he informed of his observations. Tippy then learned of North's communications with Ward on their plans for an organization covering the same purpose as that proposed by the group in Ohio. It was decided that the five interested persons should confer at an early date and discuss plans for the organization. The conference was called for September 13, 1907 in the office of Epworth Memorial Church at Cleveland. Only three of the five were able to be present: Welch, North, and Tippy. Nevertheless, after exchanging ideas on the nature of the proposed organization, the group decided to proceed with the organization and scheduled a conference for that purpose at Washington D.C. for December 3, 1907.

Invitations to attend the conference were extended to prominent clergymen working in the fields of church extension,

13. See W. H. Crawford, CSL, for work of the Central Halls in England.

religious journalism, education, and the parish ministry and to interested laymen, both businessmen and public officials. When the conference was called to order in the Ebbitt House, twenty-five of the fifty-one persons who had responded favorably to the invitations were in attendance. Among the parish ministers were Charles E. Guthrie of Hamline Church, Washington D.C.; Wilbur F. Sheridan of the Mt. Vernon Place Church, Baltimore; Frank L. Loveland of First Church, Omaha; and, of course, Tippy and Ward of their respective churches in Cleveland and Chicago. Among the church extension group were E. J. Helms of Morgan Memorial Chapel, Boston; J. W. Magruder, General Secretary of Federated Charities, Baltimore; J. D. Darling, Superintendent of City Missionary Society, Cincinnati; Joseph T. Moss of the Gadshill Settlement, Chicago; Dillon Bronson, Superintendent of the Missionary and Church Extension Society, Boston; and Frank Mason North of New York. Among the religious educators were Wilbur P. Thirkield, President of Howard University, Washington D.C. and Herbert Welch of Ohio Wesleyan University. Among the public officials and businessmen were George B. Lockwood, Secretary to the Vice President, Washington D.C.; John Williams, New York State Commissioner of Labor, Albany; Zinas L. White, President of the Z. L. White Company, Columbus, Ohio; Frank M. Gregg, President of the Vapor Light Company, Cleveland; and George D. Selby, President of the Selby Shoe Company, Portsmouth, Ohio. Among the religious journalists

were James R. Joy, Assistant Editor of The Christian Advocate, New York and David D. Thompson, Editor of The Northwestern Christian Advocate, Chicago. Some twenty-eight other leading churchmen were unable to attend but sent hearty greetings endorsing the purpose of the conference. North served as temporary chairman to open the conference.

There was a reason for inviting these particular Methodist leaders to the organizing conference. Recalling the incident, Welch has said:¹⁴

You will recognize that not all of these (delegates) were likely to be labeled 'liberal' or 'progressive'. Our plan was rather to secure a cross-section of the people of some strength and standing, feeling that such a group could do more than a specialized group to represent, to influence, to educate, and to unify our Church.

The letter of invitation which convened the group would seem to verify Welch's opinion. It stated that the informal committee had in mind the formation of an organization that was "not in the interest of any social theory" but, on the contrary, was desirous of bringing together for social study and service "men holding divergent opinions, leaving each uncompromised by the opinions of the others." Regarding the purpose of the proposed organization, the letter explained:¹⁵

The Committee has in mind the formation of a society to stimulate a wide study of

14. Letter to Charles C. Webber, May 12, 1942.

15. Minutes, iii.

social questions by the church, side by side with practical social service, and to bring the church into touch with neglected social groups. It is an effort to apply the sane and fervent spirit of Methodism to the social needs of our time.

The letter was signed by North, Tippy, Zaring, Welch, and Ward.

The papers presented at the meeting give some indication of the scope of the social service interest of the group and the direction in which the potential program of the organization was likely to move. Welch, who was elected temporary President of the Conference, spoke on the Wesleyan Union for Social Service of England, revealing its inception, organization, and practical experience as background material for the organization of the Federation. J. W. Magruder addressed the Conference on "Practical Forms of Social Service," designating the arousing of the church to its social obligations as the first great social service to be rendered; he suggested the institutional forms of service as the instruments at hand. Harry F. Ward spoke on "Social Study" and emphasized the importance of tying up the social movement with the church colleges at once. D. D. Thompson presented a paper on "Publicity" and prophesied that the establishment of the Federation would open a new era for Methodism. He pointed out the socializing influence the organization could exert through the church papers. In the afternoon, the temporary Secretary of the Conference, Worth M. Tippy, addressed

the group on the importance of bringing the church into touch with neglected social groups, particularly in the cities among the poor, the foreign-born, and the intellectuals; he also stressed the importance of making social service an end in itself rather than merely a means for the advancement of the church. Frank Mason North was the last to address the Conference. He discussed the labor problem and indicated that the first need of the Federation in that regard would be to formulate a program of concerted effort whereby the churches could bring the employers and workers into a better understanding of one another. The papers were followed by a general discussion in which the entire group participated.

The subject matter of the various papers would seem to justify the opinion of Alson J. Smith that the founding of the Federation was more "in the spirit of Jacob Riis than that of Karl Marx."¹⁶ The members of the group had been drawn together by the desire to rid their society of the encroachments of extreme individualism and the resulting monopoly that were endangering the physical and spiritual welfare of men. They saw the need for more democracy and more social motive in industry and condemned many of the evils of our competitive system. For the most part, they were social liberals who accepted their social order in

16. Op. cit., 5.

principle but proposed its modification in some details. With few exceptions, they supported a program of gradual change through social legislation. "Its charter membership," Herbert Welch has disclosed in a recent letter to Walter G. Muelder on the Federation, "contained both conservatives and progressives, possibly radicals, bound together not by opinions but by certain ideals and loyalties."¹⁷

The reception of the group by President Theodore Roosevelt following adjournment of the Conference suggests that the group was a part of the evangelistic, democratic crusade against the plutocratic concentrations of power which the President symbolized. The record of that meeting indicates the spiritual comradeship felt by the members of the group:¹⁸

Such matters (as those purposes to which the group had dedicated itself), he (the President) said, were extremely important in American life. Besides them the increase or decrease in the tariff is of minor importance. He chatted informally with various members of the delegation, whom he knew personally, and spoke frankly and earnestly upon great public questions: such as the equal enforcement of law, the importance of perpetuating the historic friendship between America and Japan; the need of the industrial education of the negro and of their educated men remaining in the south; the importance of National Japanese churches, owing to the extreme patriotism and capacity of the Japanese.

17. April 15, 1948.

18. Entered in Minutes.

This social-reform group of Methodists felt a common bond with the crusading President who had sympathized with the oppressed miners in the big coal strike of 1902, sought to stop the spoliation of natural resources by adopting a policy of conservation, denounced "big trusts" and anarchistic labor leaders, and preached "righteousness" in politics.

Following the discussion of the addresses presented, the Conference voted unanimously, before adjourning the afternoon session, to organize the proposed Federation. A committee of five appointed by the Chair was ordered to examine a tentative scheme for organization prepared by the five founders and report back at the evening session.

At the evening session, after prolonged debate, during which seventeen names were considered, it was finally agreed that the organization would be known as the Methodist Federation for Social Service. The lengthy discussion preceded the selection of the name "Federation." It grew out of the desire of the group to adopt a constitution and select a name for the organization that would leave the door open for social service enthusiasts of the southern branch of Methodism to affiliate. It was decided that "Federation" best-fitted that purpose. Speaking in this vein, Worth M. Tippy said in one of the first publications of the Federation:¹⁹

19. SOC, 8-9.

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...It was hoped that the two branches of Methodism might unite in one organization for social service, and that ultimately the Methodist Church of Canada might affiliate...Experience has proven, however, that separate organizations are necessary under present conditions...

Further indication of this desire was the action of the Conference to leave vacant three or four places on the General Council for men from the Church South who were interested in the purpose of the Federation.

The most significant part of the Constitution for this study which was adopted was the statement of purpose expressed in Article II:²⁰

The objects of the Federation shall be to deepen within the Church the sense of social obligation and opportunity, to study social problems from the Christian point of view, and to promote social service in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The Conference thus designated the role of the Federation to be one of provocation; its purpose was to stimulate and elevate social concern within the church.

With regard to methodology, the group conceived of the Federation's task as "primarily one of education and agitation and only secondarily one of organization."²¹

This philosophy was to dominate Federation policy from that time forward. Working in an unofficial capacity, the Federation chose to exert its influence by permeating the

20. Minutes, 9-10.

21. Worth M. Tippy, op. cit., 8.

journals, curricula, and organizations of the church with its social message; it saw its proper function to be the coordination of Methodist bodies already existing rather than the multiplication of new organizations.

At the closing session of the Conference the following report of the Committee on Nominations was adopted: President, Herbert Welch; First Vice-President, John Williams; Second Vice-President, Harry F. Ward; Secretary-Treasurer, Worth M. Tippy; and, as other members of the Executive Committee, J. W. Magruder, Frank Mason North, and E. J. Helms. The remainder of the morning was devoted to working out the numerous administrative details of organization which would insure the future stability and effectiveness of the organization. Preceding adjournment, a motion was adopted to send the greetings of the Federation to its sister-organization in England, the Wesleyan Union for Social Service.

So it was that socially-minded Methodists joined hands to meet the challenge of the individualistic plutocracy which assailed the nation at the turn of the century. Recalling this historical incident in an article in The Advocates in 1928, Robert T. Tucker labeled the organization of the Federation as "an attempt to do for our day what the early temperance societies and the Abolition Society did for their era," and as "one of the most noteworthy events of recent Methodist history."²²

22. April 19, 1928. Reprinted in ATY, 11.

PART TWO

PERIODIC EMPHASES OF THE FEDERATION

1871

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Instructive to an understanding of the evolution of social thought within the Federation is an understanding of the meaning of the term "social service" for the men responsible for the program of the organization. Among the conservatives, liberals, and radicals in the membership there was general agreement as to the meaning of the term. Almost without exception, the early promotional pamphlets of the Federation employed the following definition of the term:¹

Social service is that form of effort for man's betterment which seeks to uplift and transform his associated and community life. There are also some forms of service to the social needs of the individual which may properly be called social service. Social service adds to the effort to help the individual lives of people, the effort to establish proper conditions for the development of those lives. It adds to the relief of the poor and the sick and the prisoner the effort to discover and remove the causes of poverty and disease and crime. Its goal is social salvation, the deliverance of human society from disease, poverty, crime, and misery; the development and perfection of the institutions of man's associated life; and the construction of a social order that is the city of God on earth.

One will observe that the statement is so phrased that at the same time it was restrained enough to win the approval of the conservative spirit and yet courageous enough to satisfy the desires of the radical group with its longing

1. Social Service.

for fundamental reconstruction of the social order.

Moreover, social service was considered to have connoted something different from that of social reform on the one hand and socialism on the other. The conscious distinction that was made suggests the social direction in which the Federation was to move. Social service was conceived to be a broader term than social reform, which signified to the membership merely the removal of civic immorality or the modification of some of the minor details of the social order. As early as 1909 William M. Balch evidenced this mood in taking exception to the use of the term "social reform" by the General Conference of 1908 and recommending in its stead the use of "social service" by that body.² Social service embodied the larger purpose of uprooting the deeper causes of social immorality. In contradistinction to socialism social service was undergirded by a spiritual force that nationalistic socialism was said to have lacked. Social service was motivated by a spirit of love; "first, love of God; second, love for humanity, expressing itself in compassion for need of whatever sort."³ While the term "social service" was not original with the Federation, it had historical significance for it. Its connotation for the leadership of the organization indicated that the Federation was not to mimic any

2. See Minutes, Report of Committee on General Conference Reference, July 20, 1909.

3. Federation Leaflet #3, "An Immediate Program of Social Service for Pastors and District Superintendents," 5.

existing school of thought but rather as it progressed to develop its own philosophy in the light of the teachings of Jesus and the changing historical situation.

CHAPTER IV

INITIAL EMPHASES OF THE FEDERATION

The original program embodying the purpose of the Federation as set forth in the Constitution included the publication of leaflets, monographs, books, and bibliographies designed to encourage the study of social problems from the Christian point of view. It sought the organization of Local Federations and the enrollment of individual members. An early promotional flyer distributed above the signature of a charter-member disclosed that such problems as these would come within its range: poverty, its relief and prevention; public health; child labor and child life; wages and the condition of labor; immigration and the needs of foreign communities in the cities; marriage and divorce; municipal ownership and control of public utilities; temperance reform; women's economic relations; organized labor; arbitration and conciliation; cooperation and profit-sharing; social and college settlements; in short, "all problems which touch the daily welfare of God's children, our brethren." It further stated that the Federation proposed "a study that is practical and will result in action and a service that is effective because informed."¹

The immediate task of the Federation at the outset was

1. "Statement to the Church," March, 1908.

one of promotion and organization. Attention was given at once to the preparation of explanatory and instructional literature for the organization of local Federations. The "Statement to the Church" referred to above was printed in complete or condensed form in the leading periodicals of the church. It was an historical statement of the organization of the Federation and its purpose. Immediately following, another pamphlet, "What Is It?", was issued. It contained a list of the officers of the Federation, the Statement to the Church, additional signers, the Constitution, a general statement as to methods for branch-federation and individual workers, and a brief bibliography for social study. "How to Organize" was the title of the next pamphlet. It presented a suggested form of constitution for local branches, together with detailed instruction for organization; careful suggestions for the first year's work; a longer statement on individual service; and an extended classified bibliography, covering the main fields of social investigation and effort, for purposes of study and as an aid to the purchase of books.

The Federation as an organization was not absorbed with promoting itself. Its overall aim was to permeate the church with the social message of the gospel. To this end two other pamphlets were printed during this first year, "Suggestions for Individual Service" and "An Immediate Program of Social Service for Pastors and District Superintendents." The former, designed for pastors and workers

throughout the church, suggested the study of social questions and set forth projects in social service for Epworth Leagues, Deaconess Homes, Women's Societies, Men's Clubs, and other church organizations. The latter dealt with practical methods for making the local church a social force in the community.

A. Community Service The Primary Emphasis

The chief social emphasis of the Federation during its first year was community service. The Federation desired that every church should have a constructive program for serving the social needs of its community, both individually and through the largest possible cooperation with other agencies for social uplift. After all, was not the final objective of the organization to permeate the community with the Christian spirit and to raise the community life to Christian standards? To achieve that goal the Federation was fully aware of the necessity of every church becoming acquainted with the outstanding social needs of its community.

For this purpose the Federation began a campaign under the slogan, "A Community Ministry for Every Church." A suggestive questionnaire, "Community Conditions," was prepared for the pastor to guide him in the study of social conditions within his parish in areas of child welfare, charities, health and housing, labor, immigrants, and law enforcement. A flyer, "Our Immediate Program," designated the objective

toward which the pastor should work in the various areas of community study. The objective for child welfare was to secure for every child the best possible education, adequate recreation, good housing, protection from vice and from industrial exploitation and to care for dependent, delinquent, and defective children; for public health the objective was to enforce individual responsibility for the health of the community and to spread the knowledge of the methods of preventing disease; for poverty, to relieve and remove destitution by organized constructive charity work and to discover and remove the causes of poverty; for public institutions, to secure the highest standard in all institutions for the care of dependents, defectives, and delinquents, by visitation and inspection, by cooperation with public officials, and by legislation; for delinquency, to provide the best reformatory treatment for the offender, to aid discharged prisoners, and to discover and remove those conditions which contribute to delinquency; and for the worker, to secure in every community one day's rest in seven, industrial safety and workmen's compensation, reasonable hours of labor, and a minimum wage. Along with these instructive materials went the caution to the pastor to focus his first efforts upon the one most urgent community need and, above all, to know the facts in the case.

The early emphasis placed upon community service by the Federation and the encouraging enthusiasm with which it

was received was indicative of the changing conception of the relation of the church to the community. It was coming to be accepted that the church exists, not to enhance itself, but the community. The duty of the church was, not primarily to increase its membership, but to organize its membership to evangelize the community life. The good pastor was one who strove to make the community good.

One of the prominent examples of the community-service church was that led by Worth M. Tippy in Cleveland. Growing out of nine years' experience as the pastor of the Epworth Memorial Church, Tippy was prevailed upon to write The Church A Community Force. It is the story of the adjustment of a church's message and method to meet current social conditions. Listed among the fields of social endeavor in the community in which the Epworth Memorial Church was active were the purposes of the Consumers' League, a day of rest in seven, the fight against tuberculosis, agitation for public welfare institutions such as playgrounds, and the evangelization of foreign sections of the city. Motivating the entire program was the ideal of community service, or what Tippy called "the parish ideal." He said:²

The ideal which has inspired the work at Epworth has been the parish ideal, that is, a church which ministers to its entire neighborhood instead of the unrelated people scattered over a wide area.

The theory underlying the work of Tippy, one which he shared in common with J. W. Magruder, E. J. Helms, and the other leaders of the Federation's campaign in behalf of community-service churches, was that spiritual work has its greatest power when tied up with heavy social responsibility, and conversely that social work has its greatest power of regeneration when associated with spiritual activities.

A natural corollary of the emphasis on community service by the Federation during its organizational period was its emphasis on the necessity of cooperation between the local church and organized social work within the community. Usually the Associated Charities was specified as the agency with which to work. The pamphlet, "How To Organize," specified in this regard:³

Every Methodist Church ought to work with the Associated Charities, and, so far as possible, its relief workers should have some training on the committees of the Associated Charities.

To stimulate members and pastors and social workers who were not familiar with the principles and methods of scientific social work, the Federation printed what proved to be its most popular publication of the early series. It was "The Methodist Church in Organized Charity" by J. W. Magruder, a member of the Federation's Executive Committee, who was General Secretary of Federated Charities in Baltimore.

3. P. 10.

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In this compact but comprehensive study Magruder contended that the church should regard the charity organization as "an organic part of itself." Scientific social work demanded "order, economy, and an avoidance of the very appearance of the evil of pauperizing." Organized charity was in reality a threefold process involving emergency relief, adequate relief, and "radical relief." Emergency relief was merely a temporary expedient, "first aid to the injured," pending adequate relief, which required time, thought, and skill and aimed at "the physical, moral, intellectual, social, and spiritual redemption of any individual or family in distress." "Radical relief" was the term employed by Magruder to designate the type of relief which works at the rooting out of the causes of distress. Such would seek to eradicate lawlessness, disease, bad housing, child labor, and any other evil that attacks the life, health, and character of the community. Radical relief would supplement emergency relief and adequate relief "by gradually superseding the necessity for either of them."⁴

Magruder insisted that the church would have new opportunities for service opened to it by cooperation with organized social work. The relation would be a natural means for churches to get on right relations with the unchurched poor of their own neighborhoods. Within the church

4. P. 11.

the relation would bring members into personal contact with social conditions otherwise ignored. Moreover, arrangements could be made for the training of social workers in the church by the social agency. Questioning the validity of relief-giving as the chief business of scientific social work or the church, the author dramatically presented the case for the necessity of preventive philanthropy:⁵

Our definition of religion may need to be revised to meet the requirements of Him who not only 'healed all that were sick' but drove the devils out of Gadara and the money-changers out of the Temple.

The President of the Federation, Herbert Welch, also wrote a paper in this field entitled "The Relation of the Church to the Social Worker," which was reprinted from the Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction and distributed by the American Unitarian Association. Welch viewed the social work movement as the legitimate offspring of the church, growing out of Jesus's principle of the sacredness of human personality. He saw the role of the church in this relation to be one of joining hands with all forces and availing itself of all knowledge and experience in the realm of social work. He felt that the church had a twofold contribution to make to the social work movement as well as the converse, which Magruder emphasized. The chief function of the church should be "to

5. P. 28.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the system has solutions for all values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta > 0$ is satisfied. In the case when $\alpha + \beta < 0$, the system has no solutions.

In the second part of the paper, the question of the uniqueness of the solutions of the system (1) is considered. It is shown that the system has a unique solution for all values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta > 0$ is satisfied.

The third part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded for all values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta > 0$ is satisfied. In the case when $\alpha + \beta < 0$, the solutions of the system (1) are unbounded.

permeate all social work with the religious spirit"; its other function was to "pioneer the way into new paths of social effort, then yield the leadership to other agencies."⁶

B. Recognition by the General Conference of 1908

As has been said, the larger purpose behind these efforts of the Federation to develop within the church a community ministry and cordial relations with the social work movement was one of education. Church people had to be informed of social needs and the application of the gospel to meet them. People inside and outside the church needed to know its social faith and purpose. To this end the wave of pamphlets cited above was dedicated. The social need of the hour was the development of social thinking throughout the various church departments. Until that social consciousness was created, the Federation, with its limited resources and volunteer personnel, would not be free to "pioneer into new paths of social effort" as anticipated by Welch.

The Federation properly foresaw that its greatest opportunity to advance this immediate end of social evangelism lay in supporting the adoption of a social program by the General Conference of 1908. A statement on the social question by that body would thereby become the authoritative

6. P. 10-11.

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statement of the church. It is common knowledge that the General Conference of that year adopted the Social Creed, which proved to be the "first comprehensive statement of social principles by a church body in the United States."⁷ The influence exerted by the Federation membership on the social platform adopted by the General Conference will be treated in a later chapter.⁸ It is important to note here that the closing paragraphs of that document recognized the Federation, gave it a semi-official status, and assigned to it four important questions for investigation and report to the General Conference of 1912.⁹ Upon the Federation, therefore, rested during the quadrennium a new authority and the grave responsibility of leading the church to the larger recognition and application of the essentials of social and Christian conduct for which it was organized the previous year.

C. The St. Louis Conference of 1908

In the fall of 1908 the Federation held its first national conference in St. Louis. The general subject of community service and social work was given first place by the meeting. In fact, in the opening address of the

7. Twenty Years of Social Service in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 3.

8. See Chapter X, 354-360.

9. GCJ, 545-547.

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conference, President Welch recognized the meeting as "the first Conference of Social Workers of Methodism."¹⁰ More specifically, the papers delivered at the various sessions were grouped under six headings: The Church and National Welfare, Social Service and the Deaconess Movement, The Church and Labor, The Socialized Church, The Church and the Home, and The Church and Social Settlements. These areas of social concern were selected as representative of "the first needs of the Church" at that hour.¹¹

The vocational backgrounds of the various speakers were also indicative of the strong community service and social work emphases of the Conference. A majority of the addresses were gathered together into a volume edited by Worth M. Tippy, under the auspices of the Federation, and entitled The Socialized Church. Among the papers were the following: "The Deaconess and Social Settlement Work" by Isabelle Horton of the Halstead Street Institutional Church, Chicago; "The Deaconess as the Pastor's Assistant" by Bertha Fowler, Superintendent of the Philadelphia Deaconess Home; "The Value of Playgrounds" by Mrs. Edwin A. DeWolf, Municipal Playgrounds Association, St. Louis; "The Value of a Social Settlement in an Industrial Neighborhood" by Mary E. McDowell, Director of the University of Chicago Settlement; "Charity, Real and Spurious" by H. S. Bradley, Pastor of

10. In SOC, 15.

11. Ibid., 10.

St. John's Church, South, St. Louis; "The Church and Organized Charity" by Thomas J. Riley, Superintendent of the St. Louis School of Philanthropy; and "The Socialized Church" by Frank Mason North of the National City Evangelization Union, New York. Other papers were delivered by Edwin L. Earp, Herbert Welch, William M. Balch, Hanford Crawford, William F. McDowell, and Mary Combs. An Appendix to the volume treated the social statement of the General Conference and the social content of the Episcopal Address, calling attention to the immediate and widespread interest those statements had aroused throughout the Church in social questions and social service. The editor of the volume concluded a survey of the influence of those social declarations with the statement:¹²

The great Methodist Church, with its heritage from the Wesleys, is awakening to the urgent social needs of this day, and, with the Wesleyans in England, is pressing into the battle lines of the Social Crisis.

Before the St. Louis Conference adjourned some reconstruction of the general plan of organization was effected which revealed the direction of the work of the Federation in the immediate future. Four standing committees were appointed to act under the direction of the President and Executive Committee to whom were to go the results

12. Ibid., 288.

of their investigations, with their recommendations for action on the part of the Federation or the church. These committees were (1) Social Centers, to consider and promote the establishment and maintenance of social settlements and like agencies under Methodist auspices; (2) Social Studies, to consider the possible introduction of social topics and text books into the courses of theological schools, colleges, deaconess homes, conferences, etc.; (3) Church and Labor, to consider the present situation between the church and the workingman, and to suggest means for bringing the church into more cordial and effective relations with the labor movement; and (4) General Conference Reference, to prepare a report for the next meeting of that body in 1912 in response to the four questions assigned to the Federation for investigation in 1908.

One would miss the deeper significance of both the General and St. Louis Conferences of 1908 for the Federation if he were to observe only their actual historical accomplishments. Far more significant for the future of the Federation and the church in general was the forward look which gripped the delegates of both meetings. Both Conferences were enhanced by the deep conviction that the social movement of which they were a part was steadily moving toward the consummation of the Kingdom of God on earth which Jesus had prophesied. Both Conferences adjourned in that spirit. The St. Louis Conference adjourned confident that the work of

the Federation would "go far beyond the excellent things which have already been accomplished."¹³ The social statement of the General Conference closed with the sentence:¹⁴

And thus by their works, as by their prayers, let all 'the people called Methodists' seek that Kingdom in which God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

D. Desire for a Christian Social Order

The goal envisioned by those Conferences, however vaguely, was the realization of a Christian social order. For a strong nucleus of Federation members this desire for a Christian social order based on social justice was implicitly embodied in the objectives of the new organization. Men of the mood of Harry F. Ward, Worth M. Tippy, Herbert Welch, Harris F. Rall, George Elliot, Frank Mason North, William M. Balch, and J. W. Klime, to name but a few, whose lives were to be spent on the frontier of social thought and action, while recognizing the immediate social imperative of community service and cooperation with scientific social work in the church, were not to be satisfied with anything less than the fulfillment of a Christian social order which would grant social justice to all men. Encouraged by the action of the General Conference of 1908 and

13. Summary of Proceeding of the St. Louis Conference, in What Has It Done?, 2.

14. GCJ, 549.

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the growing favor with which the Federation was being received within and without the church, the group of men moved on to a consideration of some of the fundamental elements of the social order demanded by the social imperatives of Jesus and the prophets.

A volume of essays printed by the Federation in 1910 entitled Social Ministry foretold implicitly the future direction of the organization. An essay by Harris F. Rall, "The Social Ministry of Jesus," stated:¹⁵

The church has been in danger of laying all its stress upon philanthropy, upon the merely corrective service of love. The prophets pleaded not simply for mercy but right. Jesus but carried this work farther... Our need today is not more societies for relief, but more righteousness: righteousness in every place of power, incorporate in our institutions, regnant as law, giving to men not charity but a large Christian justice.

Becoming more specific, Rall went on:¹⁶

Back of the great political and social movements of the day lies this question...: How shall manhood secure its rights against every form of vested privilege?...Our supreme interest can no longer be protection of property or promotion of industry. It must be manhood. The interest of humanity is the final right.

Envisaging the Christian social order of the future, Rall concluded his essay:¹⁷

15. P. 38-9.

16. Ibid., 45-6.

17. Ibid., 54.

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The world is moving to-day toward a new democracy, not political alone but industrial and social....For the body of the new order, with its just laws and wise institutions, he (Jesus) shall be the spirit that shall give the life, from which all the body fitly framed and knit together maketh the increase unto the building up of itself in love.

Similarly, in another essay, "The Social Message of the Prophets," George Elliott pointed out the early stress of the prophets on the "notion of social solidarity" and suggested that the main problem of modern life was the difficulty of preserving, in a "contractual civilization," "the vital bonds of that punitive world in which status rather than contract ruled." The evils condemned by the prophets had their root in the violation of that social solidarity.¹⁸ The deity worshiped by Israel, Elliott added, was a God of Justice, a God of love -- which was "the two-fold spiritual basis of social justice given us by the Hebrew prophets."¹⁹ Elliott contended the prophets interpreted history as a divine process whose consummation shall be a world wherein social justice triumphs.

Harry F. Ward in his essay, "The Labor Movement," saw the world-wide movement of labor as one "gathering to itself the sympathy and activities of all who long for the social order."²⁰ Whether or not it would recognize itself as part

18. Ibid., 21.

19. Ibid., 18.

20. Ibid., 108.

of "the larger movement for industrial democracy," Ward predicted would depend largely upon the cooperative relations between it and organized religion. Both had something to share with the other. Labor needed "the God consciousness, the sense of eternal values, and the obligation of universal brotherhood" of organized religion; and the latter needed "the practical idealism," and "the intense passion for justice," of the labor movement.²¹ Both moved in the direction of the sanctification of life. In his essay, "The City and the Kingdom," Frank Mason North went so far as to suggest that even those "working in negation of Christ" were "still unconsciously zealous for his purposes." "Even to these," North added in independent agreement with Ward, "the Kingdom is as never before 'at hand.'"²² He foresaw "the high enterprise of the Kingdom to maintain a just social order and industrial rights."²³ The subject matter of Social Ministry amply demonstrates that as early as its organizational period the Federation incorporated within its leadership a radical group that would expand its social radii once the task of encompassing the church with the ideal of social service was well under way.

Summarily, in its organizational period the educational program of the Federation emphasized community service

21. Ibid., 131.

22. Ibid., 297.

23. Ibid., 314.

and cooperation in the local church with the social work movement. Through this program many Methodists were brought face to face with a wide range of social problems. The church had need to enlarge its conception of Christian responsibility. Encouragingly, scattered churches began to show signs of becoming dissatisfied with a highly individualistic conception of Christian duty. Little by little a qualitative standard of Christian progress was placed beside the older quantitative standard in the local community. Simultaneously there emerged, implicitly at first, within the Federation the desire for a new social order. The new social structure was to be erected upon the Christian social principles of the Kingdom of God and social justice.

CHAPTER V

EMPHASES UP TO WORLD WAR I

In January of 1911 the first issue of The Social Service Bulletin was published. Its appearance marked the first of a series of steps toward expansion of the Federation's program and functions. Prior to that time the Federation had focused its program of social service for the local churches on the pastors, district superintendents, and departmental officers of the church. Upon them rested the main task of socializing the churches and communities. In pursuit of that end, the Federation had published two volumes, six pamphlets, four leaflets, and a Course of Social Studies for preachers;¹ had written many letters answering inquiries concerning practical programs of social service; secured the presentation of social-service topics at Annual Conferences and other church gatherings; furnished social-service material to the authorities of the Sunday School, the Epworth League and the Men's Brotherhood; and maintained a Press Service supplying social-service items to fifteen Methodist papers. Its deliberate policy during the organizational period had been to permeate other publications with social-service materials rather than to publish any official

1. Reference has been made to these publications in Chapters III and IV. They are included in the bibliography.

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organ of its own.²

The issuance of the new quarterly opened areas of service to the Federation. The publication of a periodical presented opportunities that were not perceivable under the spasmodic policy of printing leaflets and pamphlets. A few of the new possibilities were foreseen in the first issue of the Bulletin. They included: (1) serving as a clearing house of information for the interchange of successful methods of social service; (2) issuing periodically a list by states of speakers and topics available for social service addresses; (3) reporting information, progress, and advice on social legislation pending throughout the nation; and (4) providing and promoting material for study classes to aid in training young people in our colleges and theological seminaries for social service in public life. The new emphasis was designed to bring the individual directly in touch with the Federation and to regard him as the local agent propagating social service ideas and initiating practical work.³

The second number of the Bulletin announced a change in administrative policy. The opportunities and duties of the Federation were increasing too rapidly to be handled by volunteer workers. Two immediate needs were an office which would serve as headquarters for the work of the

2. Minutes, Executive Committee, November 29, 1910.

3. SSB, January, 1911, 1-2.

Federation and a salaried executive secretary whose training, experience, and acquaintance peculiarly fitted him to carry out its program. Financial resources, however, limited the organization to the appointment of a part-time salaried secretary.

Harry F. Ward was the logical choice for this position and his selection was announced by President Welch in the October issue. Pastor of the Euclid Avenue Church at Oak Park, Illinois at the time, Ward's fitness for the work was well-attested by his thorough scholastic training in Northwestern University and Harvard University and by his long experience in settlement and pastoral work in the midst of the needy sections of Chicago, in the Polish quarter, and the Stockyards district. He was an active participant in many movements for social progress in that city and was associated with social workers and labor leaders. As Chairman of the Committee on Labor Conditions of the City Club of Chicago, organizer of the Industrial Committee of the Churches of Chicago, and Chairman of the Commission on Church and Labor, he aided in securing needed social and labor legislation in Illinois. A frequent contributor to religious periodicals, some of his articles were widely circulated in the labor press. Such a background put him in an unusual position of influence and opportunity. His appointment as part-time secretary of the Federation was pregnant with consequences of far-reaching significance.

A. The General Conference of 1912

Probably the most pressing item confronting the Federation at the beginning of the new year was the preparation of a report for the General Conference of 1912 in response to the four questions on social problems put to the organization four years earlier. The four questions were:⁴

(1) What principles and measures of social reform are so evidently righteous and Christian as to demand the specific approval and support of the church?

(2) How can the agencies of the Methodist Episcopal Church be wisely used or altered with a view to promoting the principles and measures thus approved?

(3) How can we best co-operate in this behalf with other Christian denominations?

(4) How can our courses of ministerial study in seminaries and conferences be modified with a view to the better preparation of our preachers for efficiency in social reform?

These questions were carefully considered during the quadrennium by the Committee on General Conference Reference, the results of whose labors were turned over to the Executive Committee of the Federation which drafted the final answers and submitted its report to the General Conference of 1912. This report was carefully considered by the Committee on the State of the Church, and then submitted to the General Conference with its recommendation that it be

4. GCJ, 1908, 548.

adopted as the Conference's declaration, which was unanimously done.⁵

The chief attention of the Federation was given to the answering of the first two questions. Some of the contents of the report have more significance for this study than the others. Here will be mentioned only those statements which bear directly on the later history of the Federation. Summarily, by way of "righteous and Christian" principles, the report stressed the primacy of human values and the necessity of Christianizing human relationships. Chief among the measures demanding immediate attention were the issues of a rest day, overwork, and industrial safety. The support of the church was placed behind the current campaign to place on the statute books of every state a law forbidding the seven-day week. A further demand was voiced that wages be calculated not on a seven-day, but on a six-day basis. The need of shortening the working day was seen as imperative; the eight-hour day was advocated for many of the large industries. Also, a nation-wide campaign to provide swift and sure compensation for sufferers from industrial accidents and diseases was encouraged.

Collective bargaining was supported, not only as being essential to the protection of the industrial worker,

5. "The Church and the Social Question," printed by the Federation in 1916, 28.

but also as being "the first step toward that co-operative control of both the process and proceeds of industry which will be the ultimate experience of Christianity in industrial relationships." The conscious desire to control social progress was considered to be "a new assertion of man's spiritual nature and task." Its goal was "the perfect social order" which was "the modern expression" of "the social hope of the Old Testament," and "of the Kingdom of God which Jesus taught." One of the essential principles of the social order was social justice, which required an equality of opportunity and the fullest realization of life for all men. "The teachings of Christ demand justice between social groups as well as between individuals."⁶

Interestingly, the Episcopal Address of that year was just as forceful on the social question as the report adopted by the Conference body. It indicted "organized capital" at the bar of public judgment "for the gravest crime against the common welfare." The counts in that indictment included conspiracy to advance prices on indispensable commodities, resorting to adulteration of foods to increase profits, destroying the competition in trade, and suborning legislation at the expense of the weak. Such practices were scored as "sins against humanity." "If God hates any sin above another, it must be the robbery of the poor and defenseless."

6. G.C.J., 1324-1327.

The "heartless greed" of organized capital warranted "the strongest protective association on the part of the people." Labor unions, therefore, were approved as the "only recourse" for "united and unified action" under the existing conditions.⁷

Encouraged by the far-reaching social pronouncements of the General Conference, the Federation proceeded to secure the full-time services of Harry Ward as secretary. To assist him a competent office secretary was sought and found in the person of Grace Scribner, who soon earned the designation of associate-secretary to Ward. The third personality to join the Federation forces at this time was Francis J. McConnell, who was elected to succeed Herbert Welch as President of the Federation when the latter felt compelled by his year of absence in Europe to resign his office. The new President had recently been elected to the episcopacy at the General Conference of 1912. At the General Conference of 1908 President McConnell had received wide respect for the intellect and spirit of his heroic defense of Mitchell and Bowne, professors at the Boston University School of Theology, who were tried on charges of heresy. He brought rare powers of leadership to the Federation. Upon the minds and energies of these three the drive and direction of the Federation program was largely to depend for the

7. Ibid., 215.

next ten years.

For the leadership of the Federation the new social pronouncements of the church were not a set of smug platitudes but a working program to be carried out literally and in detail by a church whose commission was from a higher authority than the General Conference. The belief that the ethical teachings of Jesus and the prophets were applicable to contemporary society was for the Federation an essential truth designed to correct the existing wrongs and injustices of the social order.

B. Social-Evangelism Missions

Armed with these notions, the Federation set out a few months later, in 1913, on an intensive mission of social evangelism to the Pacific Coast, which was to mark a new emphasis in the program of the Federation. This mission inaugurated the first full-length strides of the organization to win a section of the country to the social message of the gospel by sending its personal missionary. For two years previous to this time Harry Ward, in his capacity as part-time secretary, had preached the social gospel here and there in widely-separated communities, but this journey of the secretary west was the first of several efforts during this period of the Federation to cover a whole territory. The campaign began in southern California and extended up through Oregon and Washington, then touched Montana, Idaho,

and Utah, and ended in Denver after nearly four months of work. Two other similar continuous territorial campaigns were held during that year in the Mahoning Valley of Ohio and in the Pittsburgh area. The Report of the Secretary for 1912-1913 revealed that he had addressed three hundred forty-seven meetings and conducted thirty-six group conferences in seventeen states. All types of communities, from five hundred to five hundred thousand in population, were reached. Besides the church membership these meetings reached the labor group, in churches, in their own halls, and on the streets. The conferences also made contact with other civic and social-welfare groups. Students of twelve high schools, three theological schools, two normal schools, and a large number of colleges were addressed. The large amount of publicity secured in the daily press and in the labor papers carried the social principles and standards of the church to thousands of people. Indeed, the ambitious travel log reads like a chapter torn from Wesley's Journal.⁸

The aim of this social evangelism was to weave "the life of God into the very fabric of the community."⁹ Functionally, an attempt was made in every community visited "to leave behind some practical result, to focus the attention and action of the church group," and other interested groups,

8. Minutes, Report of the Secretary for 1912-1913.

9. "The Methodist Federation for Social Service" by H. F. Ward in MM, 238.

"upon one social need."¹⁰ Hardly a meeting closed without some practical project in social service being set up. In a farming community, the Farmer's Club and their wives were organized by the Methodist preacher to minister to the intellectual and recreational needs of the countryside. In a village of five hundred people representatives of the various organizations in the village collected at the Methodist Church to consider the application of religion to the health and morals of the community. In an industrial town of fifteen thousand the leaders of the community gathered to determine a scheme whereby the illiteracy and the bitter vice and the oppressive industrial conditions of the town might be eradicated.¹¹ Communities were inspired to regenerate themselves in all their relations.

These evangelistic campaigns were chiefly educational, and educational in the truest sense. The churches learned that socialism is a system of something more than "free love and anarchy." They learned that there was more in the industrial struggle than a sordid scramble for more pay and less work. Unionists and socialists learned that the church was no longer in the middle ages and that, in spite of its blunders, it placed pre-eminence on human life over profits. Civic and philanthropic bodies learned that they could co-operate with the industrial, socialist, and church groups

10. Minutes, Report of the Secretary for 1912-1913.

11. Op. cit., in MIM, 238.

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to the very great profit of all in the community. The Epworth Herald presented a dramatic and complimentary account of one of the missions and reflected summarily:¹²

From the very first meeting it became apparent that this campaign was rapidly to assume the proportions of a 'movement'. Every representative group...was stirred to quiet and sometimes bewildered, but always powerful, conviction for social wrong.

The Annual Report of 1912-1913 of the Secretary indicated that this widespread field work was an educational experience for him also, in that it gave him "large opportunity to observe the actual conditions of industry in various branches of manufacture and mining." The new perspective of the general social situation gained from this work evoked an observation in the Report that there appeared to be "a peculiar responsibility upon Methodism to develop a successful industrial evangelism." Such evangelism was defined as one which would reach the labor group and "transform both the conditions and the nature of the industrial process." Already representing the Federation in the field in this regard were two clergymen, E. Guy Talbott in California and Oscar H. McGill in Washington. Both were recognized as "gaining power in reaching the labor group."¹³

Two years later the effectiveness of the field work of Talbott and McGill was readily apparent. The annual

12. July 5, 1913. Reprinted in When They March, 6.

13. Minutes.

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reports of these evangelists read like the diary of a circuit rider. Talbott summarized his activities in California as follows:¹⁴

Traveled 22,000 miles delivering addresses in churches of all denominations. Gave course of ten lectures at Deaconess Training School, using 'Social Creed of Churches' as text. Taught Social Service...at numerous E.L. (Epworth League) meetings, and addressed numerous Brotherhood meetings. Worked for the passage in Legislature of six bills having social bearing, all of which were passed. Have had charge of Church Tax Exemption campaign. Contributed scores of articles to the church and labor press...

McGill's account of his work in Washington was imbued with the same evangelistic fervor.¹⁵

Visited mill and timber camps in twelve counties, some more than once, and a number several times. Visited coal camps at five points. Preached in churches and other places about one hundred and sixty times. Distributed...several thousand copies of social creed. Assisted men to find employment. Visited and spoken (sic) at labor meetings, called at the homes of sick and unemployed, visited number of isolated communities, calling at every house and often addressing children. Preached and encouraged principle of cooperative industrial organization among the workers and have been privileged to assist in the organization of several cooperative shingle mills.

H. N. Shenton, who was the third field secretary to be appointed by the Federation, presented a report of his work in the Philadelphia area that rang with a similar spirit

14. "Report of Secretary" for 1914-1915 in SSB, November 1915, 2-3.

15. Ibid., 2.

of devotion to the cause of social evangelism.

C. Transfer of Community-Service Emphasis Contemplated

Almost everywhere these social crusaders went they were well-received. In fact, by this time the social service theme was receiving such general accord that the staff of the Federation was moved to report from its Boston office, "Social Service speeches are getting too popular. The crowd wants them and we are all busy making them."¹⁶ The secretary found himself unable to accept scores of invitations to speak. His engagement book was filled months in advance. The net-result of this popularity did not serve to lull the Federation into an attitude of complacency. Rather, it encouraged the Federation to contemplate the turning over of its program of practical guidance of community-service activities to the Board of Home Missions in the near future. "The Annual Report of the Secretary for the Year Ending September 30, 1915" envisaged this possibility. It stated:¹⁷

Our Executive Committee has at various times come to the conclusion that the community service part of our work should belong to the Board of Home Missions, and should be carried out by them under a thorough scheme of departmental organization. The inspirational and educational

16. SSB, January, 1915, 1. From 1913 to 1918 the Federation's office was located at the Boston University School of Theology. Ward was a member of the faculty there during that period and was given a special office from which to direct the program of the Federation.

17. SSB, November, 1915, 3.

campaign for the Christianizing of the social order is distinctly the function of an organization which is not a collector and distributor of funds.

The proper body to act upon such a proposal is the General Conference. The following spring the General Conference of 1916 committed the promotion of community service, as desired by the Federation, to the Board of Home Missions.¹⁸ The Federation cooperated closely with the latter agency in the transitional period of its reorganization from a community-service point of view and this aspect of the Federation's work was gradually absorbed by the Board.¹⁹ The Federation thereby was able to devote more of its time and energy to its basic task, "Christianizing the social order, trying to find out what it means and how it may be realized."²⁰ This action was in keeping with the expressed aim of the Federation from its founding to keep itself insignificant by working through already existing agencies in the Methodist Church to the fullest possible extent.

A close acquaintance with the work of the Federation at that time leaves one with little doubt as to the immediate areas into which the Federation poured its energy in taking up its "basic task." Its gradual release from community-service promotion permitted a more vigorous emphasis on

18. SSB, February 15, 1928, 2.

19. Minutes, Report of the Secretary, 1912.

20. Loc. cit.

industrial conditions. A shorter work-day, living wage, collective bargaining, six-day week, and other "radical" demands by labor had had a place in the Federation program since its origin, but in the future these demands were to assume the central spot in the program. Perhaps a broader and more inclusive caption for this emphasis would be the term "complete industrial democracy." These other specific demands were considered essential means to this end.

D. Debate at the General Conference of 1916

Inasmuch as the pronouncements of the General Conference of 1912 on the industrial situation have been considered earlier and were, as noted, the creation of the Federation, it is not necessary here to restate the position of the organization on the various issues. Suffice to say that after a two-days' debate, the General Conference of 1916 again accepted the report of the Federation as its own position with one or two exceptions. The statement which came out of the Conference, therefore, became the official platform and program of both the Federation and of the denomination in the field of social action. One additional position was adopted which does deserve special recognition. On the subject of unemployment, the Conference proclaimed, "...The right to work, (the only property right which many workers have)" to be "a spiritual necessity," the exercise of which made for "spiritual development"

and the denial of which entailed "spiritual disaster."²¹ For the church in 1916 to denounce unemployment on that basis was to take a position far in advance of many so-called "liberal" groups today. Once again, the General Conference also recognized the Federation as the "executive agency to rally the forces of the Church in support of the measures specifically approved."²²

The issue which precipitated the two days' debate upon the presentation out of the Committee of the Federation Report was centered on the principle of preference in the employment of labor in the business concerns of the denomination. The debate was "generally characterized as the most brilliant debate heard on the Conference floor in four quadrenniums."²³ It brought into focus the larger issue of the anti-labor policy of the church as contrasted with the pro-labor pronouncements of the General Conferences since 1908. The Federation was involved as a result of its endeavors to adjust relations between the Book Concern in its Western House and the Allied Printing Trades Union. The attitude of the Book Concern had nullified perceptibly the efforts of the Federation from the first to use the Social Creed as a basis by which to bridge the gap between labor and the church.

21. G.C.J., 605.

22. Ibid., 616.

23. SSB, May, 1916, 2.

In the Report of the Federation to the General Conference in 1916 was included a section, "Mediation," which traced the history of the dispute to that moment. Indicative of the Federation's continuous interest in the rights of labor was its effort to adjust the differences between the contending parties in 1908 by appointing a committee from the Federation to take up the matter with the Western Book Agents. The attempt was unsuccessful. Ultimately an attitude of suspicion on the part of organized labor developed concerning the genuineness of the work of the Federation and the sincerity of the utterances of the General Conference's statements. In San Francisco the unsettled dispute was given as the reason for the refusal of the labor forces there to hear the secretary and in Chicago for their refusal to cooperate in a joint meeting. Moreover, in 1913 a letter was sent out by the Pressmen's and Press Assistants' Union to organized labor the country over calling attention to the attitude of the Book Concern on the question of recognition.²⁴ In 1915 at the request of the Federation the organization of another national attack throughout the labor world upon the denomination by the Allied Printing Trades Union was postponed until the Federation could carry the negotiations further. Much correspondence was involved, in addition to many personal interviews

24. See Minutes, Report of the Secretary for 1913-1914.

and one joint interview between the Cincinnati Book Committee and the officers of the Federation. The proposal of the Federation was that the Book Concern adopt a preferential policy; that is, between applicants of equal qualifications, the union man be given preference provided, however, that in a like case a prior preference be shown to Methodist applicants. The Local Committee finally declined to adopt this policy and the Book Committee as a whole declined to change their actions.²⁵

Late in 1915 Charles Sumner, a member of the Federation's General Council, was appointed by the union to conduct negotiations with the Book Concern with full power to act and a guarantee that the local organizations would abide by his decision. Sumner proposed to the Cincinnati Agents that the Book Concern explicitly inform its employees that it was an open shop in the strictest sense of the term and that no man would be discriminated against whether he was a union man or not. In the case of differences growing out of efforts of coercion to join the union or to agitate against the union by either party against the other, the dispute was to be settled by a committee of arbiters and mediators.²⁶

On the basis of these developments the Federation recommended that the past differences in the controversy

25. G.C.J., 1434.

26. Loc. cit.

should be forgotten and that the new suggestion by Sumner be considered entirely on its merits. The Federation further suggested that the Book Agents should be instructed by the Conference to try to work out a harmonious relation with the union on the basis of the principle of preference set forth above. The Report of the Federation concluded with the reflection that the dispute under discussion was "one of the gravest matters now before our Church," inasmuch as a decision on it one way or another would affect the relation of the denomination to the whole world of labor for years to come.²⁷

In an effort to adjust matters without taking them before the Conference, the Book Committee met with Sumner and a group of Federation members in a number of conferences during the first sessions of the General Conference. Although an understanding was reached on some matters, the question of preference persisted as the sticking point. Finally the whole matter was left in abeyance until the Conference had adopted some general principles on the subject. The Federation withdrew the specific matter from the Committee on Book Concern to avoid the development of any bitterness. General agreement was reached that every effort would be made by the Book Committee to make an adjustment in accord with the will of the General Conference.²⁸

27. Ibid., 1435.

28. SSB, May, 1916, 3.

Prior to the presentation of the Report of Federation out of Committee on the State of the Church as its own report, a conference between members of the Book Committee and Federation members reached an agreement that the Book Concern issue could be treated after the fashion of general principles and decided apart from Book Concern details. But the first thing that happened on the floor of the Conference was the dragging in of the Book Concern matter by a delegate seated next to one of the Book Concern Agents who had not been at the meeting preceding the session. The two-day debate that ensued was characterized by "argument" on the Federation's side and "prejudice and misunderstanding" on the other side with the latter preventing the decision from going through intact by making an attack upon the union for discrimination against Negroes. An employer reportedly "drew the dragon's teeth" by getting the word "preference" struck out.²⁹

Nevertheless, the bulk of the Report was approved and along with it the highly-explosive section committing the church to "complete industrial democracy" as defined above. The church thereby committed itself, along with all business interests, to realize some form of collective bargaining and to use every possible endeavor to cooperate with labor organizations as long as they met Christian standards.

29. Ibid., 2.

This stimulation unquestionably required the formation of a new attitude on the part of the Western Publishing Houses. Shortly following the Conference the Book Committee indicated that it was preparing "a plan to carry out the principles adopted by the General Conference."³⁰ There the matter rested for the time being.

With the adjournment of the Conference, the Federation turned its attention to propagandizing in behalf of three of the rights of labor contained in the Social Creed which had been selected, in cooperation with the Federal Council's Commission on the Church and Social-Service, as calling for immediate attention. The three measures as designated were one day's rest in seven, reduction of the hours of labor, and a living wage. This program did not call for any major readjustment of the Federation's plans. Since the fall of 1912 the Bulletin had carried at the top of each of two of its four pages the slogans: "One Day's Rest in Seven," and "For a Living Wage." Legislation was the means sought to enforce these demands. In this instance the Federation was not summoning the church to play a pioneering role but merely to support the legislative campaigns already in process. Recent data which had demonstrated beyond question the connection between low living standards and a weak moral and spiritual life made it

30. Minutes, Report of the Secretary of 1916, 3.

incumbent upon the churches to rally behind these campaigns.³¹

E. Socializing the Curricula of the Church

To get a General Conference to support such measures was a significant accomplishment. To educate local church memberships to what such support entailed for them was a far greater challenge. It was a task which confronted the Federation at the beginning of each quadrennium. Its role in the church from the first was to change the point of view of many of the people. It was obvious that many in the church did not think in social terms. Neither did they know the social facts of modern life nor the social meaning of Christianity. The contribution of the Federation in this regard was the development of a propaganda of social education within the church.

The approach employed by the Federation to educate the general membership of the denomination to the social commitments of its leaders was primarily one of imbuing the organizations of the church with the social spirit. The most effective port of entry was the curricula of the church. The efforts of the Federation to do this during the previous quadrennium established it as one of the major emphases of that period.

31. GCJ, 1438.

Beginning in 1914 the secretary of the Federation contributed "The Social Interpretation of the Lesson" to the Sunday School Journal each week. Moreover, during the same year a regular department of two or three pages was prepared, largely by Grace Scribner, for the Adult Bible Class Monthly. The latter was published in book form as a study course for Adult Bible Classes under the title, Poverty and Wealth. Numerous editorial notes for Sunday School periodicals were also prepared upon request. To serve as a textbook in social service for the Epworth League, the popular-selling The Social Creed of the Churches was published. In 1916 the secretary prepared the textbook, The Bible in Social Living, for the Fourth Year Senior Course of the Graded Lesson Series. In that year he also collaborated with R. H. Edwards in preparing the final text in the Voluntary Course of Bible Study for Colleges, Christianizing Community Life, which was jointly issued by the North American Student Council and the Interdenominational Sunday School Council. In addition, signed articles were supplied to all of the denominational publications, including the Methodist Review and the Home Missions Quarterly, and numerous unsigned articles dealing with current issues of vital importance to social service appeared in all of the church's weekly papers at irregular intervals.

The influence of these contributions on the social thinking of the church was readily apparent and acknowledged. The General Conference of 1916 received this report from the

Committee on the State of the Church:³²

All the Sunday School literature has taken on the social angle of interpretation...The Sunday School product of this and the next generation will...(be prepared) for enlistment in a long drive against the forces of evil and the entrenched privileged influences that work for injustice and unrighteousness among men. In this task the Federation of (sic) Social Service has led with remarkable certainty, and to it belong the honors...

This, however, was not the full extent of the Federation's work in this area. During this period special pamphlets were also prepared for the various agencies of the church on the application of social service to the particular work of each one. Twenty-five were circulated, some of them jointly with other denominations and one by the Federal Council of Churches for all denominations. Included were: Social Service by Epworthians, distributed by the Epworth League; Social Service in the Sunday School, distributed by the Board of Sunday Schools; Foreign Missions and Social Service, distributed by the Board of Foreign Missions; Social Service for Young People, distributed by the Federal Council of Churches; The Living Wage, A Religious Necessity, distributed by the American Baptist Publication Society; and Social Service for Church Women, prepared by Winifred Chappell and distributed by the Federation. Surveying this aspect of the Federation's program in the light of the

32. G.C.J., 615-616.

organization's small, four-figure budget, the Report above concluded:³³

No other organization in the church has a stronger influence and is doing a more valuable work at anything near the cost.

F. The Social Situation at the Close of the Period

The close of the fourth quadrennium of the twentieth century found the Federation riding on the crest of a wave of popularity. Social Christianity had become "highly respectable" as one writer phrased it. In fact, at least twelve denominations had adopted "an established, formalized, creedalized, institutionalized program" of social service with all the advantages and disadvantages such a process entailed.³⁴ A glance at the social pronouncements of the various denominations of that period would seem to confirm Hopkins' judgment that "the widespread acceptance of social Christianity throughout American Protestantism" portends the "success" of the social gospel in having obtained many of its important objectives.³⁵ Within Methodism, the fervor of the Federation for the application of the ethical teachings of Jesus to society had broken out among the church agencies--the Sunday School, the Epworth League, the Women's Missionary Movement, the deaconess movement, home missions, foreign

33. GCJ, 616.

34. J. Neal Hughley, TPS, 14.

35. Quoted in loc. cit.

missions, and the church press.

Still, the leadership of the Federation would have insisted upon qualifying Hopkins' optimistic observation. In terms of its own objectives, the young organization would admit only to having reached its immediate objectives. Charitable agencies within the church had been endowed with the scientific approach. The concept of "community service" in its larger meaning was replacing the narrower concept of "mercy" work. Social evangelism was beginning to receive practical expression in the local church. The curricula of the church had been imbued with the social spirit. The trade-union and socialist movements were studying the Social Creed and viewing the church with an air of benevolent skepticism instead of outright rejection. For the Federation these were encouraging achievements, but against the background of its long-range objectives, its "important" objective, of securing a Christian social order and all it entailed by way of "complete industrial democracy" and so forth, they represented merely the laying of the foundation for the larger task.

The propelling force beneath the popular wave of social Christianity was the surging tide of the more general social movement that was sweeping the nation. Recurring financial panics and depressions since the turn of the century had enhanced the sense of the progressive movement. The Federation had been born in the financial panic of 1907;

its first leaflet was in response to the widespread unemployment that followed in 1908. The need of raising the living standard of the masses was so apparent that it could be said that a conservative party, in the traditional sense, did not run in the Presidential election of 1912. Republican President Taft had launched an active campaign against trusts and combinations in the restraint of trade and therein merited the designation of being more "progressive" than his popular predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt. The latter in that year threw his hat in the ring of the new Progressive Party whose platform included many of the provisions of the Social Creed. Woodrow Wilson severed ties with the Democratic conservatives and led the party to victory on the platform of the "New Freedom." Perhaps the most significant evidence of the progressive spirit was the polling in that election of nearly a million votes by Eugene Debs, the Socialist candidate -- a "radical" vote that hitherto in American history would have indicated impending social revolt. Living conditions continued to tumble downward, 1914 being the worst year for the wage earner since 1908.³⁶ The social movement gained momentum.

But then something happened. The progressive wave began to lose some of its force. The national economy suddenly received a "shot" in the arm from warring Europe. By

36. The Beards, BHU, 438.

the end of 1916 most branches of industry and agriculture were booming; unemployment had almost disappeared; wages were higher; profits were accumulating. The relief which the temporary recovery brought to millions of people deprived the social movement of some of its drive. Ahead a breakwater loomed in its path, war! Against it the progressive tide rushed and was dispersed.

CHAPTER VI

EMPHASES FROM WORLD WAR I TO THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The program of the Federation for Social Action before the Great War was built around a twofold task. On the one hand it had sought to engage the local church in practical projects which expressed religion in relation to the needs of the community; on the other hand, it had set itself to apply the ethical principles of Jesus to the social order. Following the General Conference of 1916 plans were processed for turning over the former task to the Department of Home Missions; thereby leaving the Federation free to pursue what it considered its "basic task" of Christianizing the social order. Hardly had the latter program gotten into first gear when the historical situation forced immediate consideration of another issue, war. The month before President Wilson read his Proclamation of War the March Bulletin proclaimed the grim fact of war to be "the dominant issue" of the day.

Square across the path of the envisaged program of the Federation stood the specter of war demanding all the spiritual energy that was to have been spent in bringing in the new social order. Admittedly the Federation, like the other social service groups, had not anticipated this development. Nothing in the Social Creed had been said about war. "We took it for granted that this ancient evil (war) was

dying of old age," confessed the Bulletin.¹ Without hesitation the Federation accepted the challenge, Recalling the time when the religious passion of the nation had to focus its attention upon the abolition of slavery until a way was found to emancipate the slaves, it professed that the hour had come to center the capacities of Christianity upon the abolition of war, "to concentrate the mind of the world upon this idea: War Must Be Destroyed!"²

The May issue of the Bulletin featured an "Emergency War Time Program" for the church. Probably its most unique proposal was the three-point program of spiritual leadership, which was prepared for leaders of religion. Concretely, the duties prescribed the threefold responsibility of keeping down hate, defending democracy from the encroachments of militarism, and creating the interest and mind which would produce a constructive peace free of nationalistic ambitions or fears. Only the international elements of Christianity, it was believed, had the power to mold the nation unfalteringly in the difficult path that its leaders had chosen as its goal, world democracy.³

War threw out a challenge to the social application of Christianity of which the Federation was well aware. Efforts that had been directed towards the betterment of

1. March, 1917, 1.

2. Loc. cit.

3. May, 1917, 2.

humanity in time of war became directed into other channels. In line with this development the secretary of the Federation prepared a pamphlet, Social Duties in War Time, which was published by Association Press. In this study war was condemned as the stumbling block it is to human progress. Not only are social passions dissipated, but at the same time social needs are increased and the "world's misery" is piled up beyond all comprehension. Widespread suffering, in turn, produces a callousness of compassions and drying up of sympathies. Another challenge from war lay in the field of social justice. Emergency situations produce emergency measures. New working standards, such as shorter days and less days per week, are evaded and violated to speed up production in behalf of national self-interest. Undue and unjust profits are taken by food speculators and munitions makers. Finally, religion as well is abridged by war. Freedom of speech is suppressed and thereby free religion. The experience of England in the war prior to the entry of the United States, the secretary said conclusively, had crystallized these observations.

As the war progressed such pessimism was justified by fact. If anything, unanticipated woes befell the social movement. Labor linked arms with industry behind Samuel Gompers' declaration that "this is labor's war" and practically lost its identity in the total mobilization of capital,

materials, opinion, and women for the gigantic struggle.⁴ Flattered by the places given it on commissions and the prestige also received by the scarcity of labor accompanying all war, labor began to overrate its social status and bragged that it had gained larger concessions in the United States than in any other country. It even went on record in favor of the protection of American industries.⁵ Labor in its naiveté underestimated the consequences for it of the piling up of big fortunes by industry which in four years of the war for democracy made more millionaires in America than a whole decade of peace.⁶ When the tumult and the shouting of war had died away, the stupidity of labor's assumption became apparent in the wave of strikes which beset the nation.

A. The Post-War Social Situation

The self-deception of labor was symbolic of that expressed by the social movement as a whole during the war. The procession of economic legislation before the war, the controls exercised over transportation and industry which had been built up during the war, and the emotional appeal of the war for democracy, all linked to the President's "New Freedom," understandably created the impression among the socially-minded that the new order of industrial democracy

4. The Beards, RAC, II, 644.

5. SSB, November, 1927, 1.

6. Beards, op. cit., 667.

would follow close upon the end of the war. An article in a twentieth anniversary publication of the Federation, After Twenty Years, referred to this period as the one in which it was commonly held that the redemption of the world was to come "through the evolutionary process, and a Christian social order was to come without any more Calvary."⁷ It was without preparation, therefore, that many followers of the social movement were confronted with the removal of the cherished controls upon industry and transportation after the cessation of hostilities. In fact, in only one relation did the Wilson administration persist in continuing unsparing control over private affairs; namely, in the suppression of critical opinion, the one control that had proved disadvantageous to the social movement.⁸ The net result of this unexpected turn of affairs for the progressive forces was an attitude of hesitancy and confusion. Reactionaries eagerly took over the initiative and under the slogan "back to normalcy" were able to control the next two administrations under Harding and Coolidge.

The social forces of the country found themselves confronted by a very touchy situation at the close of the war. Having suspended judgment on pressing social issues

7. Harry F. Ward, "Twenty Years of the Social Creed," The Christian Century, April 19, 1928. Reprinted in ATV, 5.

8. By means of the Sedition Act of May, 1918, which in effect made criticism of the administration illegal. See the Beards, op. cit., 670.

during the war period, they were abruptly thrown into a consideration of such controversial issues as the open shop, child labor, nationalization of public utilities, eight-hour day, and unearned income, in an atmosphere saturated with the lingering psychology of war. Unexpended animosities of war, left without a common enemy, were now directed internally against the opposition on a social issue. War-time fears led people to consider peace-time issues with their emotions instead of their reason. Worse still, the practice of violence condoned by war as a method of persuasion was readily transferrable to the domestic scene as an efficient method of persuasion.

Undeniably, the Federation's position at this juncture was a precarious one. Indeed, reflection upon its program for the post-war period would lead one to marvel that the organization was able to survive in such an atmosphere. Nevertheless, the Federation adhered steadfastly to its decision to keep moving forward. Its post-war publications revealed that its program was to move out from the assumption that "the will of humanity" was seeking to organize a form of society which would provide the means for "the fullest development of all the people" and would require "from all the people the utmost contribution of service to the common life."⁹ Concretely, in terms of function, this

9. Harry F. Ward, Social Unrest in the United States, 9.

involved the testing of the political and economic aspects of life by the Christian principles of the value of personality, the necessity of brotherhood, and the law of service. In terms of an immediate world goal, this challenged men to make the world safe for democracy, to emancipate all peoples from all types of governmental despotism that they might be free to develop their own lives to the fullest extent. In terms of methodology to be employed in pursuit of this ideal, the Federation chose the twofold technique of free discussion and social experimentation. This involved the constant and unhampered consideration of all measures proposed in relation to social change by the light of the social principles of Jesus; and, secondly, the promotion of practical projects in "social relationships a little ahead of their time" that would implement the realization of the professed social ideals.¹⁰ Undergirding the overall effort would be the spirit of sacrifice, the "vital breath" of the world movement.¹¹ The social situation into which the Federation was to move with this high calling was to demand endless sacrifice of self.

Beginning with the post-war era the periodic emphases of the Federation are again readily discernible. The social unrest of the third decade of the century was to be the proving ground of the Federation as it set itself, at a

10. Harry F. Ward, NSO, 335.

11. Ibid., 384.

reactionary juncture in American history, to proclaim not only the basic principles but also some of the more concrete requirements of the new social order. Perhaps the most obvious departure to be noted was the new intensity which was given to the consideration of international affairs and their bearing upon domestic issues. Undoubtedly this grew out of the increased sense of kinship with the common people of all the world that developed as a result of the war. War and its offshoots, of course, continued to receive much attention. As a result of the suppression of liberal thought that mushroomed during the early twenties civil liberties, particularly the issue of free speech, received increasing attention. That all of these emphases are interrelated is immediately observable. In general, the Federation attempted to call attention to the major historical incidents that had a bearing upon the advance or retardation of the new social order. If any two social disputes could be labeled the most prominent for the Federation during this period, they were the Russian revolution and the open shop campaign. So significant were they for the Federation that they deserve to be treated in some detail.

B. "The Russian Question"

The Russian revolution of November, 1917, which brought the Bolsheviks into power was viewed with grave

consternation by the western world. In the absence of ample, much less impartial, information extremist predictions from the right and left of its significance for America had a frustrating effect on the overstimulated war-minds of the people. Conflicting reports of the revolution from observers of various sympathies left the scientifically-trained mind hungry for reliable data. For the most part the mass was fed on a diet of atrocity stories and inhumanities committed by the Bolsheviks that were second to none told about the German march into Belgium. In the midst of the accusations and counter-accusations an important historic fact relating to the revolution was overlooked by most parties; namely, that the new government in Russia was committed to the establishment of a new social order, one that was, for the first time in history, to be organized around the principle of labor instead of property.

Such a gigantic project of social representation was watched with great interest by the Federation. In an advance letter to the church press the Federation announced that its first Bulletin of 1919 would be devoted to a consideration of "The Russian Question." The announcement launched a journalistic attack by the New York Christian Advocate that carried through the following spring issue by issue with one or two exceptions. To make matters worse, the publishers of the Sunday School Graded Lessons about the same time announced the elimination of the secretary's "The

Social Interpretation of the Lesson" from that course of study effective after January, 1921. Similar action was taken with regard to lessons submitted to the Adult Bible Class Monthly.

The Executive Committee and Advisory Council of the Federation responded to these developments by holding a meeting at which it was voted to send to the editor of the Advocate, James R. Joy, a statement condemning the editorial on the Russian issue as "precipitate and in effect unfair." The same body voted to send a request to the appropriate offices of the Sunday School Syndicate for a copy of the Minutes covering the official action on the text prepared by Ward, The Bible and Social Living.¹² In response to a request by a group of prominent clergymen for a statement of his personal attitude toward Bolshevism, Ward submitted a letter printed in the Advocate issue of April 3, 1919 in which he repudiated the violence, dictatorship, and anti-religious decrees of the Bolsheviki but at the same time maintained that their broadly-stated ideal, "To all according to their needs; from all according to their ability" was "an expression of and in part the creation of Christian social ethics" which flung "a thundering challenge" to organized religion.¹³ Another letter printed the following week by President McConnell intimated that there might be

12. Minutes, March 24, 1919, 2.

13. P. 434.

some connection between the rejection of Ward's contributions to the Sunday School periodicals and the agitation by the Federation for a more democratic labor policy within the publishing houses of the church.¹⁴

The rebuttal of the Advocate to all this appeared in an editorial of the May 15, 1919 issue. It stated the editor's appreciation for Ward's personal statement and classified it as reassuring as far as it related to the Secretary's personal opinions. It insisted, however, that the Executive Committee of the Federation lacked the candor to answer the one vital issue; namely, the serious impropriety of issuing "in the name of the Church a statement on Bolshevism which lies open to the sinister interpretation which many honest readers placed upon it." It further accused the Committee of refusing to inform the public that measures had been taken "to prevent further presentation of Bolshevism in the Bulletin."¹⁵

The rendering of a decision with relation to the validity of the contending arguments requires a closer look at the contents of the issue of the Bulletin and the Advocate editorial in question. First, let us consider the Bulletin issue, "The Russian Question."¹⁶ Immediately the reader was informed that the Federation's "concern with this question

14. Ibid., April 10, 1919, 450.

15. P. 611.

16. January-February, 1919.

is because the Soviet Government is an attempt to organize a new social order." The first section, "Sources and Character of Information," suggested the difficulty of obtaining impartial information on so disputed an issue. The statement was then made:

It is assumed that readers are familiar with the case against Bolshevism as it is constantly presented in daily press and in propaganda of its opponents; therefore, and because of lack of space, that material is not summarized here.

An analysis of "The Soviet Government" followed which treated such questions as what is a soviet, how is it organized, what is its extent, and its general character? Another section was a consideration of "The Bolsheviki Rule" which presented data on the leaders of the party (Lenin and Trotzky), its policies (general and specific aims), its program (election platform and qualifications for voting), its working program (steps taken and contemplated), and its terror-element (amount, kinds, and attitude towards). A brief section was given to an outline of the "Official Attitude toward Religion" in which a summary of the original decree on the separation of church and state and cooperation with religious organizations by the state were treated. Then followed the most important section for this study; some questions were presented with regard to the significance of the revolution for the Christian faith. Stating that the aim of the Soviet Constitution

"is to establish a state composed of producers and to make socially useful labor the requirement for citizenship," the secretary queried: "Are its methods destructive of that ideal?" By way of answer it was suggested that a decision on the matter must await further development and that nothing which could be proved against the Bolsheviki could "diminish the value of the ideal of a democratic social order composed of cooperating producers." Recognizing that "acts abhorrent to humanity have occurred under Bolshevik regime," the editor then considered the question of responsibility and contemplated to what extent the inhumanities were "due to the policy of that regime" and to the "practice of all Russian parties of using 'terror' against opponents." In response it was suggested that there "is sharp contradiction of testimony" on the question of responsibility and also as "to whether methods of suppressing rebels are more ruthless than our own 'law and order'". Again it was concluded that more evidence was needed before passing final judgment. The issue ended with the list of source material, primary and secondary, and of two agencies (one pro- and one anti-Bolsheviki) with a reminder in italics that the sources should be considered in the light of the initial assumption on which the issue was prepared.

An editorial, "Bolshevism Lifts Its Ugly Hand," written by James R. Joy in response to the Bulletin study

appeared in the Advocate of March 13, 1919.¹⁷ It was written to defend its opinion that the "Bulletin presents the case for Bolshevism" and was being sent out to leaders of Methodist opinion "with the unmistakable aim of making America safe for Bolshevism." To test the soundness of this conclusion a "competent observer," not named, who was in Russia during the revolution, was asked his opinion of the Bulletin study. The reply labeled the Bulletin as a "vicious sheet" from which the editorial concluded that the Federation's presentation gave the reader "an impression in favor of Bolshevism" and "contrary to the warrant of the facts." Several of the particulars of the Bulletin material were then criticized, among which the Federation's reference to the decree of marriage as making "divorce possible on application of either party" was attacked as veiling the fact that such was no less than the "free-love" doctrine of the "Bolshevist Herron."¹⁸ The Bulletin was admonished to call "barbarism by its right name." Further on, the editorial suggested that the anti-Bolshevist agency was included in the list of sources merely to offset the contention that the Bulletin was "essentially Bolshevik propaganda." The editor concluded

17. P. 322-24.

18. George D. Herron, a "man given to the social revolution," was divorced from his first wife in 1901 and a few months later married Miss Carrie Rand in a ceremony wherein each chose the other "to be my companion," thus registering his opposition to legal marriage as a "coercive" institution. See James Dombrowski, EDC, 172ff.

by attacking the Bulletin study as a source that, "while professing to give enlightenment," actually proceeded "to darken counsel with ingeniously-chosen words and to ambush and outflank foreseen objections by means of evasions and half-truths." The secretary was discounted as a person who could be relied upon to present an unbiased view of the revolution inasmuch as the Bulletin indicated that he had "surrendered his mind and heart to the fundamental idea of Bolshevism" and desired "to see it displace the foundation upon which the American nation is built." A request that the authorities responsible for Federation policy take action that shall make it "impossible for its authorized representatives" either openly or secretly "to cooperate by pen or voice in the world-wide movement to overthrow democracy and set up the hateful tyranny of a class" concluded the editorial.

The historian weighing the validity of the attack of the Advocate upon the Federation has all the advantages of a Sunday-morning quarterback. Uninhibited by the psychological strain accompanying the incident and informed as to what followed, he is able to re-examine both the November revolution and the accusations leveled at the Federation by the Advocate with more detachment than the participants. The overall criticism by the editor of the Advocate growing out of the exchanges that followed the printing of the editorial concerned the impropriety of the Federation's issuing

a statement on Bolshevism in the name of the church and the lack of candor of the Executive Committee in refusing to announce its decision not to present further information on Bolshevism in the Bulletin. There is no historical evidence to support either contention.

The Federation never issued any statement as the position of the Methodist Church even when it was actually quoting the official utterance of the General Conference or of the Board of Bishops.¹⁹ The Federation always spoke in its own right as a voluntary organization of Methodists paying its own way. Of course, if the church in effect were to assume as its own the credit which ensued from the work of the Federation, it likewise followed that it would have to share any less favorable criticism heaped upon the organization. As a matter of fact, to avoid further accusations of intentional misrepresentation of its opinions as being those of the church the Bulletin began about a year later to include in the masthead a statement to the effect that the secretary and assistant secretary were totally responsible for the topics and material presented.²⁰

Regarding the alleged decision of the Executive Council that it voted not to permit consideration of further information on the subject of Bolshevism in the Bulletin,

19. See Newsletter of Federation of March 31, 1921.

20. See SSB, November, 1921.

there is no evidence to support such a contention. The Minutes of the meetings of that body in which the dispute with the Advocate was considered disclose no information that would verify such an allegation.²¹ Actually, a later issue of the Bulletin in its entirety was devoted to a treatment of "Social Conditions in Soviet Russia."²² Periodically other issues were devoted to a consideration of the Russian question.

Of much graver concern to the Executive Committee than the criticisms of the Advocate was the action of the authorities of the Sunday School Journal who, on the basis of the announcement of the Russian study, terminated their agreement with the Federation's secretary to accept lesson materials after January, 1921. This action, the Advocate stated, was taken because the secretary "leaned so strongly toward Bolshevism."²³ This report of the Journal's decision intimated that it was the conviction of Journal authorities that the secretary of the Federation accepted basic principles of the Bolsheviki which were unChristian and thereby tainted the Federation with the Bolshevik label.

In his statement written in reply to the request of prominent Methodist pastors printed in the April 3, 1919

21. See Minutes, March 24, 1919.

22. February, 1921.

23. March 13, 1919, 322.

issue of The Christian Advocate, Ward thoroughly denounced the aspects of the November revolution which were contrary to the Christian conscience. Whatever terror or sexual bestiality that accompanied the revolution he condemned as having "properly aroused the moral indignation of people." But more important than these revolutionary excesses, he contended, was the fundamental political, economic, and sex theory of the Bolsheviki. "It is, of course, axiomatic in social ethics that sex purity must be maintained," he stated dogmatically. He then rebelled against "the decree which forbids the teaching of religious doctrine in all educational institutions in which general subjects are taught." Neither did he condone in any way the theory of economic revolution by the "dictatorship of the proletariat" maintained by force of arms or others. Such was unjust because it would lead "inevitably to vigorous and brutal repression of political opponents and other economic classes."²⁴

In another place that same year Ward condemned the dictatorship of the proletariat with such finality that, in view of the repeated raising of the Communist question in relation to the Federation, it deserves to be quoted in its entirety:²⁵

24. P. 434.

25. Social Unrest in the United States, 11.

I have no use for dictatorship in any way, either in government or industry or church. I have been preaching and writing democracy now for twenty years and I am not going to change my principles over night. Furthermore, I am against the theory and practice of dictatorship by the proletariat not only because I believe it is unethical, but also because I believe it to be unscientific. You cannot carry out the change to economic democracy that way, for the simple reason that you cannot control economic production efficiently in the transitional stage by means of one class alone. You have to have the cooperation of everybody that knows how to manage industry if you are going to democratize it.

Positively stated, in terms of policy, the Federation stood above all for free discussion. It was the pursuit of this policy coupled with a "drive" of scientific curiosity that led the organization to examine every social proposition for any truth it might hold and that brought it continuously into conflict with conservative forces.. Applying this approach to situations of social strain unavoidably destined the Federation to a life of conflict. The Russian question was the first major incident in which the role of the Federation assigned by General Conference -- a role of adventuring in search of the ethical Christian principles that would undergird the Christian social order -- was brought into sharp focus. There was no uncertainty among the leadership of the Federation with regard to its task. In the Newsletter of March 30, 1921, after several conflicts within and without the church, its guiding principles were

simply stated:²⁶

FREE SPEECH AND THE OPEN MIND. That is our policy. Let everybody be heard and every fact be known and every viewpoint considered. Then follow the truth to the end. That is where some will walk with us no longer. If the Gospel requires that the foundations of the social order be changed--then Christians must set to work to change them.

The president, F. J. McConnell, supported that policy emphatically. So decided was he on this point that time and time again he said, as he did at the Industrial Conference of the Interchurch World Movement at Astoria, Oregon in 1920, that it was better to "say one thousand wild things and get some good truth uttered so as to accomplish some purpose" than to keep a man silent because one disagrees with his point of view.²⁷ It was in this spirit that the Bulletin analyzed the Russian revolution. For the Federation it was fundamentally a social experiment seeking a new social order. The main purpose of the Bulletin's study was to see, as its questions indicated, if the revolution apprehended and sought "the rest of the Christian ideal."²⁸ The dispute over the Russian revolution with the Advocate was merely one of various expressions of the larger conflict that grew out of the head-on collision of the forward-moving policy of the Federation with the reactionary spirit of the post-

26. Harry F. Ward, March 30, 1921, 3.

27. Quoted in Information Service, March 31, 1920, 6.

28. SSB, January-February, 1919, 4.

war era which was dedicated to a return to "normalcy."

C. The General Conference of 1920

The Federation was to witness another expression of the reactionary tenor of the nation in the sessions of the General Conference of 1920. Previously, every General Conference since 1908 had adopted in whole, or with slight modification, the statements on religion and industry presented by the Federation. This policy was not followed at the 1920 meeting.

Four reports were presented for adoption by the Federation to that body in 1920. They were: (1) Statement of work accomplished during the quadrennium; (2) Labor Policy of the Methodist Book Concern; (3) The Church and the Industrial Question; and (4) Essential Elements in the Christian Social Order. The last two Reports were recommended for adoption as the utterance of the General Conference. All the Reports were referred to the Committee on the State of the Church. On Report No. 1 majority and minority reports were adopted which differed concerning the amount of control to be exercised over the Federation by the Board of Bishops. Inasmuch as no action was taken by the Conference, the organization thereby continued in its previous status. Report No. 2 was dealt with in another Committee. The disposal of Reports Nos. 3 and 4 by the Committee is somewhat vague. Apparently in place of them the Committee adopted

another report revising the Social Creed of the Churches and the General Conference Declaration of 1916.²⁹ At any rate, no action was taken by the Conference so the utterance of the church concerning industrial and social problems remained therefore that adopted in 1916.

In the light of the conservative mood of the Conference, which reflected the more general mood of the nation in 1920, its silence on industrial and social problems, resulting in effect in a reiteration of the 1916 position as its official voice on these matters, might be considered a negative victory for the Federation. Had the Reports been presented for the consideration of the Conference in its prevailing mood probably nothing but an acrimonious and confusing discussion would have been precipitated. In the opinion of Francis J. McConnell, it was just as well for the progressive forces that no action was taken.³⁰ A letter by one of the delegates, E. P. Dennett, an active member of the Federation, reflected the same attitude. He wrote that, in his opinion, the Federation was no "worse off for the Conference silence" and suggested that it might have suffered had it "spoken in the mood in which the closing days found the Conference."³¹

29. See SSB, September, 1920, 3.

30. Quoted by E. P. Dennett in a letter to Harry F. Ward, June 8, 1920.

31. Loc. cit.

D. The Open Shop Campaign

The General Conference experience was symbolic of that which of necessity became the chief occupation of the Federation forces during the post-war period. More and more it became evident that the Federation would be compelled to give its major attention, not to moving forward, but to protecting what had been won before. The open shop campaign was a case at point. In cooperation with the Interchurch World Movement and the social-service commissions of other denominations and faiths, the Federation gave of its services liberally to combat the well-organized anti-union movement that appeared following the war under the pseudonym, the "American Plan of Employment."

In 1918 the War Labor Board had declared, "The right of workers to organize in trade unions and to bargain collectively is recognized and affirmed." It further stated that employers "should not discharge workers for membership in trade unions nor for legitimate trade union activities."³² This position was in line with the social pronouncements advocating collective bargaining of the various social-service commissions. By the fall of 1919 the employer-group had a well-coordinated campaign in operation to nullify the war-time gains of the labor movement. The Bulletin reviewed

32. Quoted in Vital Questions Leaflet, No. 1, "The Open Shop," by Harry F. Ward.

this development in an issue entitled "The Open Shop Campaign."³³ In it were listed as the aggressive leaders of the campaign the National Erectors' Association, National Association of Manufacturers, and National Founders' Association. The source cited was a survey conducted by the Associated Employers, an organization with its office in Indianapolis. The survey revealed that there were five hundred forty local "open shop" organizations in two hundred forty-seven cities in forty-four states, the majority of which had been formed after the armistice.

Similarly, the Bulletin related, the United States Chamber of Commerce had conducted a referendum on the right of open shop operation, "receiving one thousand six hundred seventy-six votes in favor and four opposed." At the same time full-page advertisements plugging the campaign were financed by employers' associations, particularly in sections of the country where labor was not strongly organized or where an aggressive fight was being waged against it. The National Association of Manufacturers contributed to the campaign by maintaining an "open shop department" which issued bulletins on the progress being made.

The campaign was so staged as to make the issue one of a choice between two alternatives, the "open shop" as against the "closed shop," which, in effect, meant that the

33. January, 1921.

aim of the "open shop" campaign of the employers was a "closed shop" against unions. The existence of intermediate forms of unionization, such as the preferential shop and union shop, were for all practical purposes overlooked. Designating the open shop as "The American Plan of Employment," the campaign labeled any alternative suggestion as "un-American." Thus ran the logic by which the members of the opposition supporting collective bargaining were smeared as "reds," "foreigners," "Bolsheviks," etc. The real issue, nevertheless, was the method of negotiating with employers; the question of collective bargaining as over against individual bargaining. The employer-group demanded full control of hiring and firing, management, amount and quality of product, and system of pay. An individual was powerless to bargain over these matters.

E. The Steel Strike of 1919

The Steel Strike of 1919 portrays strikingly the various aspects of the open shop issue which have been raised. Because of the work of the Commission on Inquiry of the Interchurch World Movement and the clarity of the issue at stake it was probably one of the most publicized strikes in the labor history of the nation. It was of particular interest to the Federation inasmuch as Francis J. McConnell was Chairman of the Committee.

The steel strike began September 22, 1919 and lasted

till January 7, 1920. It was a crushing defeat for the steel workers. Yet, in a sense, it was not over, for the main issues had not been settled. That which precipitated the strike still remained. Motivated by the desire to achieve a lasting peace between the contending parties, the Interchurch Committee, convinced that the basic facts had never been comprehensively discovered by the public, undertook to analyze and publish the facts of the dispute. Forthcoming from the inquiry were two volumes on the strike which were widely publicized and discussed.³⁴ For social Christianity the study is significant as one of the most authoritative instances in which the method of scientific investigation was applied to an industrial conflict to enable a clear judgment by a social-service agency on the moral issues involved.

One of the factors contributing to a rebellious state of mind among the steel workers which eventuated in the strike was the "let-down" they felt after the war. During the war President Wilson, General Pershing, and other national leaders gave recognition to the workers before unknown through "proclamations" in which labor, especially "organized labor," was recognized. Even the plant

34. Report on the Steel Strike of 1919 (RSS) and Public Opinion and the Steel Strike (FOS), both prepared by the Commission of Inquiry of the Interchurch World Movement. Much of the material for the following discussion is taken from these sources.

superintendents became solicitous. The workers were impressed; they visualized a new day for their class after the war. Instead, the armistice brought rumors of cuts in wages and the so-called "foreigners" once again heard themselves called "hunkies" by the swearing foremen who returned to their old ways. This, coupled with contrasting news of advances for labor in England and Russia brought complete disillusionment to the workers, particularly the English-speaking and Slavic workers who comprised a good percentage of the mass in many mills.³⁵

The real grievances of the workers were the working conditions. The Commission found that the average work-week was 68.7 hours. The twelve-hour day was in effect either on a straight shift or a broken division of eleven to thirteen or ten to fourteen hours, with an unbroken twenty-four-hour work period at the turn of a shift.³⁶ Approximately half the employees were subject to the twelve-hour day, and one-half of these in turn were subject to a seven-day week; less than one-fourth worked under sixty hours. By comparison, "the American steel average (work-week) was over twenty hours longer than the British."³⁷ In terms of wages, the annual earnings of over one-third of all productive iron and steel workers were, and had been

35. RSS, 148-150.

36. Ibid., 247.

37. Ibid., 12.

for years, below the level set by government experts as the minimum of subsistence standard for families of five. In terms of an "American standard of living," nearly three-fourths of the steel workers could not earn enough to meet it.³⁸ These deplorable conditions justified the conviction, the Interchurch Commission concluded, that the United States Steel Corporation, in a very real sense, "was the chief organizer of the strike."³⁹

Coupled with the disillusionment concerning their real status following the armistice, these conditions made the workers ripe for unionization by the American Federation of Labor. The workers demanded the right to unionize and "a substitution of industrial democracy for industrial autocracy."⁴⁰ A strike and organizing campaign were called for the purpose of forcing a conference in an industry in which no means of conference existed. The conference was requested to consider the setting up of trade union collective bargaining and the abolition of the twelve-hour day and arbitrary methods of handling employees.⁴¹

The Corporation refused to agree to meet with the union representatives. Its spokesman, Elbert H. Gary, insisted that there was "absolutely no issue."⁴² The strike

38. Ibid., 12-13.

39. Ibid., 148.

40. Ibid., 246.

41. Ibid., 144.

42. Quoted in POS, 338.

was merely the consequence of Communist agitation. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry's mediation effort with Gary reported him as saying that "the whole movement of the steel strikers was a movement of red radicals" and that "the only outcome of a victory for unionism would be Sovietism in the United States."⁴³ He refused to recognize that the real issue was unionism, maintaining that it was rather a question of whether the American government should be supported and its institutions upheld. This was the philosophy which set the feverish cry of Bolshevism and the anti-red campaign that followed in motion. In this spirit the red-tag was applied to anyone, worker or sympathizer, who tolerated even so much as a hearing of the strikers' side of the case. Workers suspected of sympathizing with the strike were discharged and blacklists of their names were passed from plant to plant with instructions not to hire them. The Commission investigators were accused of being radicals "and members of the I.W.W." in a special spy report. Labor spies were hired both directly by the steel companies and through "labor detective" agencies to whisper that the strike was failing and that the union leaders were "reds" and crooks. The right of assemblage and free speech were abrogated in the "steel towns;" labor organizers could not hold meetings. Such had been the rule in towns about

43. Ibid., 336.

Pittsburgh for years before the strike.⁴⁴ Yet of all the raids and arrests made "no backers of the strike were convicted of 'radicalism' in court."⁴⁵ Nor was the Commission able to obtain any evidence from the steel companies to support Gary's accusation, or those that followed in press and pulpit, that the strike was "a movement of radicals."⁴⁶

Functionally, nonetheless, the real issue for the steel companies was the maintenance of the open shop. The United States Steel Corporation and Bethlehem Steel Company, the two largest manufacturers of structural steel in the country, refused to sell steel to contractors unless they would agree to erect an open shop. This policy, according to Eugene G. Grace, President of Bethlehem Steel Company, was inaugurated in September, 1919, when the A. F. of L. tried to organize the steel workers. Testimony before the Lockwood Committee revealed a meeting in August, 1919, of representatives of these large steel corporations to destroy unionism.⁴⁷ Their efforts were successful. Public opinion was mobilized against the strikers "through the charges of radicalism, bolshevism, and the closed shop, none of which were justified by the facts" and the strike was defeated, the Commission concluded.⁴⁸

44. RSS, 235.

45. Ibid., 38.

46. POS, 340.

47. See SSB, January, 1921, 2-3.

48. RSS, 248.

The second volume issued by the Commission of Inquiry is devoted to an analysis of the forces of public opinion which brought about the defeat of the strike. Its findings leave no doubt that the press and pulpit were on the side of the steel companies. The greatest compliment that can be paid the Commission for its work is that its revelations, supported by the social-service commission of the different faiths, were instrumental in bringing about such a general reversal of public opinion that the steel companies were eventually compelled to adopt a change of policy in regard to the twelve-hour day. The report of the Commission became a matter of national public knowledge. Referring to the Commission's work, the secretary of the Federation reflected in 1928:⁴⁹

A company that was powerful enough to refuse to accept the labor policy of the war department in its wartime production had finally to yield to public opinion.

The Federation cooperated with this project headed by its president through the distribution in quantity of circulars on the study and of copies of its October, 1920 Bulletin which summarized the facts disclosed by the Commission. Periodically, its weekly bulletin, Information Service, which was printed between 1918 and 1920 to supply members with digests of articles in current periodicals bearing on

49. The Christian Century, "Twenty Years of the Social Creed," April 19, 1928. Reprinted in ATY, 5.

social issues, carried news of what others were saying about the strike and the work of the Commission.

What the open shop campaign meant in actual practice was systematically disclosed by the investigation of the Interchurch Commission. Twenty years of experience indicated the social results of such a policy. For the worker it meant long hours, low wages, bad living, and poor morals. For the community it meant inter-group conflicts and the abrogation of constitutional rights. Whole communities had been deprived of their rights of free speech and free assemblage, not only for workers but for other interested citizens. For the moral mind, the extension of the open shop meant the extension of its social consequences and the subsequent deterioration of social life.

The Federation, along with other social-service agencies such as the Federal Council Commission and the National Public Welfare Council, took the position that the "foolhardy" campaign would result in increased "chaos, anarchy, and warfare in our industrial life." In the light of the standards of the church the Federation saw the immediate test of the open shop policy to be "its willingness to enter into argument with organized labor" on a preferential basis which left open to the non-union men opportunity for employment which was played up as the item of chief concern by the employers in their rejection of unionism. The "Greater Question" for the Federation was the effect of the campaign

on the "development of constitutional democracy in industry, which the churches had declared to be the Christian method of industrial control."⁵⁰ In relating its convictions to specific issues in the post-war period the Federation opened itself to the same smear attacks against which it was protesting.

As a matter of fact, the secretary of the Federation was cited as a "Bolshevik" in an anonymous "special report" on the Interchurch World Movement in which a spy investigated the investigations of the Interchurch Commission on the steel strike. The "special report" became a serious item not because any of its allegations of "reds" in the Movement were true, but because it was received and circulated as true by powerful men, steel company officials in Pittsburgh and other steel cities. The particular "report" in which the secretary was named was "created" by an agent working for the National Civic Federation and was sent with a covering letter by Ralph M. Easley, Chairman of its Executive Council, to officers of the United States Steel Corporation on March 28, 1920. This organization included among its members some of the largest employers in the country. "Document B," as the report was called, accused Ward of being one of the "reds" backing the steel inquiry. He was "proved" a "red" by evidence such as, "Mr. Ward has a

50. SSB, January, 1921, 2.

receding chin...and a low broad receding forehead, generally indicative of the laboring class." This was followed by "Document C" which was widely circulated as "extremely confidential" and outlined events which never took place. This circular exhibited a curious mixture of accurate statements and inaccurate deductions presented as facts. For example, it described an address by the secretary of the Federation:

In other words, he intimated that the teachings of Jesus Christ should be brought into the industrial fields and that the cardinal principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount should be injected by the churches into industrial relations.

This true quotation was then put with quotations from self-professed "reds" and the conclusion was drawn that the secretary was one.⁵¹ If this name-calling item had been an isolated incident, it would have been of little concern to the Federation. Actually, however, it was but one episode of a general pattern of red-tagging in the post-war period that resulted in the suppression of the rights of free speech and free assemblage of many who advocated any departure from the status quo. So numerous were the violations of these constitutional rights that the Federation, devoted to a policy of free discussion, was obligated to champion these rights as one of its primary emphases during the third decade.

51. For information quoted, see POS, 71-81.

F. The Defense of Free Speech

The Federation was committed to the securing of a Christian social order, finding out what it meant and how it could be realized. To accomplish this task freedom of expression was an absolute necessity. The orderly progress of the social movement of which the Federation was a part could not continue without it. The inevitable results of repression of freedom of expression are disorder, violence, and bloodshed. History is eloquent on the subject. Freedom of expression is the escape-valve of an orderly society.

In the decade following the war the Federation became acutely aware that the maintenance of free speech demanded vigilance and determination. New ideas and new movements were tagged with "red" labels and the holders were in many cases consigned to prison. Before the war spirit had run itself out the nation was dotted with federal, state, and municipal legislation that hampered the liberal at every turn. In contrast to the general pattern the Federation championed free speech as one of the fundamental issues of the period; for it held that this right was one of the "indispensable instruments of social progress."⁵²

The precedent for the rush of legislation that

52. SSB, January, 1920, 1.

curbed progressive thought was set by the passage in June, 1917, of the Espionage Act, which laid heavy penalties on all persons who interfered in any way with the prosecution of war; by the printing, writing, or circulating of disloyal or abusive language about the form of government, Constitution, military or naval forces, or uniform of the United States. Not content with the sweeping provisions of this law, the President asked and received from Congress a more severe measure, the Sedition Act of May, 1918, a statute which, in the opinion of the Beards "in effect made any criticism of the Wilson administration illegal."⁵³ Also operative in the post-war period was the Federal Immigration Act of 1917, amended in 1918, which, among other things, provided that aliens who believed in or advocated the overthrow of the United States government by force or violence or were members of or affiliated with any organization which believed in or taught such ideas could be deported. At the same time state legislatures were passing similar laws with severe penalties against sedition and criminal syndicalism aimed at ending industrial disorder and the destruction of the Industrial Workers of the World. Also, municipal and local ordinances of the same type were passed in many places and investigating committees with wide powers appointed.

53. RAC, II, 640.

The Bulletin allotted generous space to a consideration of these laws and their social consequences. The issue of January, 1920, entitled "Legislation Against Radicalism," described the provisions of the above laws, quoted authorities such as Zechariah Chaffee, Jr., to demonstrate the adequacy of already-existing laws and then considered the important questions involved for the maintenance of free speech. It was concluded that what expression of opinion was punishable under the existing laws turned upon two issues: (1) the question of intent and (2) the question of how near spoken or written words came to securing the accomplishment of forbidden acts. It was granted that "the final test of any legislation is in its administration."⁵⁴ During the post-war decade, particularly during the early twenties, the Bulletin devoted other issues to the treatment of the following issues: "Free Speech in the United States," December, 1920; "Political Prisoners," March, 1921 and November, 1922; "The Michigan Case," January, 1923; "Criminal Syndicalists," September, 1923; and "The Spy in Government and Industry," September 1, 1924.

The administration of these political laws led the Federation to make a pertinent observation. In one of its Vital Questions Leaflets (a series of pocket-sized leaflets which were prepared to perpetuate the work and memory of

54. P. 3.

Grace Scribner, assistant secretary of the Federation who was killed by an automobile in 1922), Roger N. Baldwin pointed out that the only individuals prosecuted under these laws "for the overthrow of government by force and violence" were those persons who represented radical ideas and working-class movements. Those who stood for "things as they are" and who advocated force and violence against radicals were never prosecuted. For instance, Baldwin added, no one had suggested prosecuting Massachusetts' Secretary of State Langtry for saying, in speaking of radicals, "If I had my way I would take them out in the yard every morning and shoot them." Nor was the Mayor of Davenport, Iowa, molested for stating in an order to the Police Department:

Load up the riot guns for immediate use
and give them a reception with hot lead. We
don't want any Reds here and we will go to
the limit to keep them out.

These statements were held to be much more reckless than those of most of the radicals arrested.⁵⁵

Armed with these elastic political statutes, various branches of the government, national and state, found justifications to set in motion machines of inquiry and arraignment. "Intelligence" agencies were created which directed professional and amateur detectives in collecting and filing information of every kind concerning citizens of every class,

55. "Have You Free Speech?", Vital Questions Leaflet, No. 3.

ranging from members of the Industrial Workers of the World to simple-minded matrons who joined a Socialist party. The Bulletin of September 1, 1924, related the disclosure of the hearings of that year at Washington on the activities of the Department of Justice that brought to light this nationwide government spy system which had flourished since the early days of the war. The appointment of Harlan F. Stone as Attorney-General by President Coolidge that same year brought the announcement of a new program dedicated to the cessation of anti-radical activities on the part of the Bureau of Investigation. This issue also revealed the origin and extent of industrial espionage, of which the Documents discussed earlier were examples. These practices of espionage served their purpose. The cloak of suspicion their revelations wove round many progressives, regardless of their truth, destroyed the social effectiveness of the victims. Through suspicion, or by direct orders from industrial offices as in the case of many steel towns, speaking platforms were closed to the progressives, meeting halls were closed to labor organizers and union men, and political meetings were raided.

G. The Michigan Communist Case

"Raids on the reds" were quite numerous in the early twenties. One which illustrates the trend and had repercussions for the Federation was "The Michigan Communist

Case," analyzed in the Bulletin of January, 1923. In the summer of 1922 the Communist Party of the United States held a national secret convention on Lake Michigan. After a hasty adjournment on the third day upon learning of the presence of federal investigators in the area, seventeen delegates who stayed over were arrested by a raiding party of federal, state, and Chicago detectives. Charged with violating the Michigan Criminal Syndicalism law, they were lodged in jail in St. Joseph and held on ten thousand dollars bail each. The indictment named the men and women as guilty of violation of the Michigan law which forbade the advocating, advising, or teaching of a doctrine which endorsed crime, sabotage, or violence as a means of accomplishing industrial or political reform.

For the Federation there was no other issue involved than that of free speech and freedom of assemblage. No overt criminal act was charged and no incriminating evidence was offered other than the doctrines advocated by the Communists. It marked the first attempt in the United States to suppress a political party, a party with elected representatives participating in European legislative bodies.⁵⁶ It had national significance in that the raid was made, according to press reports, on order of Wilbur J. Burns, head of the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice,

⁵⁶. P. 1.

who acted without the aid of a federal law to support any action. The questions posed by the Federation were, "Can a political party constitutionally be outlawed? If so, where will that process stop?"⁵⁷ In short, could thinking be declared a crime?

The Federation became implicated in the wide publicity surrounding the case when its secretary, in his capacity of chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union, sent a letter to the citizens of Burien County, where the trial was being held, stating the latter organization's disagreement with Communist doctrine but supporting the right of a group to discuss or advocate it. The Methodist declaration for freedom of speech was cited in support of the Union's position. Inadvertently, through a combination of routine office actions a copy of the January Bulletin on the case was enclosed in the letter without the knowledge of the leader of both organizations. A letter to the papers of that area by two Methodist ministers attacked Ward for seeking to commit the Methodist Church to un-American propaganda and to prejudice the citizens of the county. The Associated Press circulated a story built around the latter letter in which the Bulletin issue was described as "a sympathetic review of the Communistic movement." A statement was then sent to the papers by Ward citing the

57. P. 4.

Methodist declarations again and stating the real issue raised as being "whether un-American propaganda can be successfully met by the un-American method of repression."

The Christian Advocate of New York of April 12, 1923, commented on the incident and concluded that the Bulletin revealed "no bias in favor of Communism, nor any prejudice against it" and that "such publications ought to aid in correcting the compass."⁵⁸ At this stage of its development the Federation was committed primarily to freedom of inquiry and discussion and only secondarily to a presentation of opinion and propaganda.

H. War -- A Social Sin

While the Federation tried at all times to keep abreast of the changing social scene in its many manifestations, it never lost sight of the basic social needs of the period nor was it distracted from them. During the third decade, above and beyond all other matters the Federation gave its foremost consideration to the problem of war. Looking ahead to the General Conference of 1924, the Federation set itself with forethought to creating throughout the church an awareness that war was the crucial social evil of the hour. Its position was concisely and emphatically stated in the Bulletin of May 15, 1924. Condemning war as

58. Quoted in Newsletter, No. 3, April 14, 1923, from which all information on this subject is taken.

"the most colossal and ruinous social SIN that afflicts mankind today," it presented its official attitude as follows:⁵⁹

We clearly stand for three major principles, namely; excommunication of war by the church, outlawry of war by the nations and an honest consideration of what is the Christlike attitude for individual men and women who really purpose to take and seriously win in a semi-pagan world.

For the Federation the immorality of war was no longer questionable.

From the vantage-point of a second World War one might preclude that to agitate for the adoption of this platform on war by the church in 1924 was exceedingly presumptuous. A closer observation of historical trends of that day, however, does not warrant such an assumption. By that time the war-fever of the general public had abated. Peace associations began to show their heads above the clouds of suspicion spread by the War and Navy Departments and by private societies for "adequate defense." This is not merely speculation. The army of the nation had been reduced to 125,000. Senator Borah had spearheaded the drive which had called forth the Disarmament Conference in Washington in 1921 that, in spite of any warranted question of its effectiveness, symbolized among the people a desire for peace. Moreover, gestures were made by President Harding

59. P. 3.

towards American participation in an "independent" World Court, which suggested progress over the strict isolationism of previous policy. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the press about this time began to tell something of the truth about war stripped of its sentimental garb. The Federation considered this "one of the most interesting developments of the day" and quoted from the Pittsburgh Post:⁶⁰

Wars usually are imposed by the selfish few, who hide their purpose by appeals to patriotism as if honor were involved.... What is needed is a stimulation of their (people's) intellectual vision to the point of seeing how they have been duped.

In fact, the real cause of the country's entry into the war became so commonplace within a year that the Secretary of the Navy, Curtis Wilbur, was able to say unapologetically in a speech before the Connecticut Chamber of Commerce in which he pointed out the financial interests of American concerns in the war:⁶¹

We fought not because Germany invaded or threatened to invade America but because she struck at our commerce...To defend America we must be prepared to defend its interests.

Stimulated by the new openness with which the issues of the former war were being considered and the pronouncements that were being made against war, the Federation proceeded to

⁶⁰. Loc. cit.

⁶¹. Quoted by the Beards, op. cit., 705.

formulate a statement for the General Conference of 1924 that would compel the church to face the moral issue of war in all its barbarity.

In the fall of 1923 the secretary of the Federation was instructed to draft a statement on war. Its president, F. J. McConnell, was also designated to prepare a statement on the economic order. Both statements were to be presented to the General Conference in the spring for adoption. Attached to the Minutes of this meeting was an outline of the statement on the economic order which contained an interesting note at the end of the statement. The note inferred that the points of the report would "be emphasized by the Scripture and Methodist phraseology," which suggests that no item was to be overlooked that would influence a favorable reception by the Conference of the reports to be submitted.

In accordance with the charge committed to the Federation by the General Conference, the twofold statement, "Concerning War" and "Concerning the Work of the World," was submitted to that body the following spring.⁶² Of immediate concern here is the statement on war. It began by stating that it was useless for the Federation to point out the principles and measures making for the Christianizing of the social order, as requested by the General Conference,

62. Printed in full in SSB, May 1, 1924.

since they could not be carried out as long as war and preparation for war continued. It was questioned whether Methodists could fulfill their historic function "to spread scriptural holiness" if the doctrines and practices of war were to continue or could "be made perfect in love" when war required that we "be incited to hate." Condemning war as "the world's chief collectivism," the statement urged the church not only to denounce it as a means to achieve "greater fellowship and peace" but to remove the causes of friction that lead to war. Besides recommending the participation of the nation in a world court that would have jurisdiction over all international disputes and would administer international law "upon the basic principle that war is a crime to be outlawed by all nations," the Federation advocated a genuine disarmament program, an "Association of Nations" representative of all peoples to handle all matters of common concern, and the removal of economic causes of war by cooperating with all nations for the international allotment of raw materials by inspiring the American citizens to pay their due share of the price of world peace and by denouncing diplomatic or military protection to citizens trading or investing in foreign countries "beyond seeing that they receive under the laws of every country equal treatment with the citizens of that country."

The adoption of this report by the Conference would have placed Methodism in the vanguard of the anti-war

crusade, which was the intention of the Federation. The report was not considered. Instead, the Conference, in the opinion of the Federation, evaded this standing committee's report in favor of the statement by a special committee. In so doing, in the words of the Bulletin, "a prophetic utterance" was prevented, "as the secular press of the country has been quick to note."⁶³ While the utterance on war which was adopted must have represented an advance, to be sure, for many of the delegates, it took "no position nor advocated anything that has not been taken or advocated by some other body."⁶⁴ The report adopted failed to put war outside the pale of religious activities. Unlike the Federation's statement, it did not declare war a sin and therein it lacked the prophetic note of the former.

Out of fairness to the report adopted, the Bulletin noted that it was commendable in one respect; it opened wide the door to individual pacifism, which the Bulletin claimed was the very thing that haunted the Conference after the presentation of the Federation's report. The report adopted stated in part, "Governments which ignore the Christian conscience of men in time of peace cannot justly claim the lives of men in time of war." In further stating that man must not be drawn into "the dilemma of deciding between

63. June 15, 1924, 3.

64. Ibid., 4.

support of country and loyalty to Christ," the report intimated that vast changes in policies would be required in diplomatic and political circles. On this platform the Federation was to build its program calling for local churches and individuals to do what the Conference refused to do; namely, to excommunicate war, to dedicate themselves "never again" to have any part in advocating war as a means of adjusting differences.⁶⁵ The Federation had announced this as the alternative to favorable Conference action in a Bulletin that went to press before the Conference even opened.⁶⁶

After the close of the Conference the Federation continued its aggressive campaign to teach the nature, causes, and consequences of war. Its program covered the wide area suggested in its Conference report and more: disarmament, world cooperation, imperialism, nationalism, and militarism. Vital Questions Leaflet, No. 2, "Disarmament," pointed out the government's trend toward increased armaments as revealed in the national budget and the plans for quadrupling the civilian army and mobilizing industry. The statement, written by Mary Jenness, disclosed that there was "a peace leadership in America as well as a militaristic leadership" and placed the choice before the people in challenging terms, suggesting as an alternative to war the organization of an

65. Ibid., 3.

66. "If the Conference Fails Us," May 15, 1924, 3.

international court to settle international disputes. Its final conclusion was that the only way "to prevent war is to stop thinking war and think peace."

Continuing its educational campaign, the Federation considered "The Question of World War Guilt."⁶⁷ After quoting reliable sources on the significance of the revealed secret diplomacy between the nations during the war it exposed the shrewd and desperate game of current business interests. The importance of oil and other national resources in creating international tensions was treated and a bibliography on the subject was submitted. The imperialistic motivations of American intervention in China, the Near East, and south of the Rio Grande were finally considered. Perhaps prophetically a statement by the secretary, in the Orient at the time, was quoted, "Watch China and the contest between Russian diplomacy and ours over that country. There lies the material for the devastating world conflict." Indicative of the content was a quotation taken from a statement by Sanford Griffith, the European correspondent of Wall Street Journal in the April, 1924 issue of World Tomorrow:

Banks do not operate on sentimental considerations...When they hold mortgages at home or abroad which are overdue, they turn them over to the representatives of the law, whether sheriff or the mariner, for collection.

67. SSB, November 1, 1924.

That this policy was operative in the nation's activities in Nicaragua, China, and Mexico during the post-war decade was hardly to be denied. President Coolidge was emphatic in his position that "neither love of peace nor desire for normalcy would prevent the use of military force in the protection of vested rights."⁶⁸

The development of militarism, particularly in the field of education, became an item of increasing concern for the Federation during the mid-twenties. The expansion of the R.O.T.C. program into the educational institutions of the church was repeatedly scored by the Bulletin. Contents of the R.O.T.C. Manual and of the lectures of the officers were surveyed and submitted to the public for review. Incidents illustrating the evil influence of the military on the campus were cited. A typical case at point was an incident at Boston University.⁶⁹ According to reports the editor of a student publication, The Beanpot, was compelled to resign because she dared to devote an issue of her magazine to a thoroughly humorous treatment of the local R.O.T.C. unit of the College of Business Administration, a two-year required course in the school. In the publication she said, "Babbit University in order to make business men for Better and Bigger Business requires the R.O.T.C. for two years." The

68. The Beards, op. cit., 708.

69. SSB, April 15, 1925, 4.

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Bulletin pointed out the contradiction between this action on the part of the dean and the pronouncement of General Conference that "militarism must cease" which, intended or not, was the attitude suggested by the editor. Happily, another issue a year or so later reported that Daniel L. Marsh, President of Boston University and an active member of the Federation, had abolished the compulsory feature of military training at the University.⁷⁰ Incidents in other church institutions, such as DePauw and Northwestern Universities, also received space. Interestingly, one of the reasons the Federation was opposed to peacetime military training was stated by the secretary as early as 1919:⁷¹

...Because of the manifest fact that should present economic conditions continue, and then you arm the people and train them, you are simply playing into their hands and giving them the weapons by which they will presently overthrow the present government.

Generally, however, the attempts of the Federation to combat the mushrooming militarism were phrased in the light of the resolutions passed by General Conference which had declared that "militarism must cease." Typical of the criticism leveled by the Federation was this one directed against military training in church institutions:⁷²

What does it avail a great denomination to 'recognize that permanent peace can be

70. Ibid., January 15, 1927, 2.

71. Social Unrest in the United States, 10.

72. SSB, September 15, 1925, 1.

achieved only as the children of the world are trained to believe in it, and to strive for it,' while even pastors and whole conferences take no action against subjecting 115,000 young minds to such (R.O.T.C.) anti-Christian teaching?

Such was the antithetical position the Federation assumed in the face of the revived preparedness-campaigns of the militarists and professed patriots in the mid-twenties.

Such agitation within and without the church by the Federation against the militaristic trends of the nation, coupled with just as emphatic denunciations of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti and the prolonged incarceration of the Centralia prisoners, placed the Federation once again beside the restless minority whose ceaseless protests revived the "red-hunt" during the late twenties. The Bulletin called attention to this revival in its last issue of the spring and the first of the fall in 1927.⁷³ The "new red-hunt" had a special interest for the Federation. This time it was mainly directed not at the radicals in the labor movement but at the liberal preachers, teachers, and other public servants who were working for world peace and in behalf of a better social order. Correspondingly, the brunt of the attack was borne in this instance by the militarists and professional patriots, with the industrial propagandists playing only a supporting role. Manned by "the interlocking publicity bureau of the War Department and the journals of

73. June 15, 1927, September 1, 1927.

military, patriotic, and industrial organizations," the crusades labeled everybody subversive "who doesn't think that military training in high schools and colleges is an effective measure of preparedness."⁷⁴ The Bulletin of September 1, 1927, analyzed the new attack. For the Federation the issue remained as in the earlier campaign one of deciding which of the opposing factions was more surely playing into the hands of the reds -- "the liberals who seek progressive social change or reactionaries who would keep the status quo regardless of its injustices."⁷⁵

I. Emphasis on American Foreign Relations

"Respectable" people found little to complain about during the Coolidge administration. After all, what room was there for complaint? Business was on the upgrade. Religious and educational institutions were recording new expansions. To be sure, there were some signs of distress, but would there not always be some unfortunate creatures? Farmers and planters were sinking deeper and deeper into debt and some aspects of business might be considered "spotty," but, on the whole, the stock market had revealed increasing strength and prosperity ever since the election of 1924.⁷⁶ On the basis of these apparent gains a general

74. SSB, June 15, 1927, 1.

75. Ibid., 4.

76. See the Beards, op. cit., 720-21.

feeling of prosperity spread across the nation.

The Federation insisted there was no foundation for such an attitude. The Bulletin looked upon it as a dangerous "illusion" that had to be pierced. The "abnormal money making and spending" and the so-called "prosperity" were accused of being realized only "at the expense of the deprived and depleted people of Europe and Asia."⁷⁷ More and more space was given to a consideration of American foreign policy with regard to its bearing on the domestic economy. New production-records demanded new markets. Unscathed by the war, American industry saw endless opportunities for expansion of its markets in both the destroyed areas of Europe and the undeveloped lands of Central and South America and Asia; Business invested heavily in the foreign market following the war. Of this development the Beards wrote:⁷⁸

From year to year more millions were poured into the foreign investment market; the Department of Commerce...kept an army of agents abroad drumming up trade; American business men were told to 'get-into the foreign game,' to lend money to foreigners; to seek outlets for goods, and, if necessary, to enlarge their plants for the purpose of meeting swelling demands.

Another reason for the Federation's increased interest in the international scene was an incidental one. The secretary was on sabbatical leave from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 1924 and 1925 during the middle of this

77. SSB, February 15, 1926, 1.

78. Op. cit., 720.

expansion period traveling and lecturing throughout the countries of the Far East including Russia, India, China, and Japan. His presence in that part of the world during this period put him in a position to observe first-hand the effect of America's expansion policy on some of the nations affected. His impressions of the social situation abroad were related from time to time in the Bulletin throughout the first half of 1925.

Probably the most influential of the early issues of the Bulletin devoted to international relations was that of October, 1923, entitled "The United States and Her Little Neighbors." This issue was so well-received that the entire edition was exhausted in less than a month, many copies having been sent by request to Mexico, the West Indies, South and Central America. The study began with a series of quotations from a variety of sources on the question of the general imperialistic tendencies of the nation and then considered specifically American relations with Nicaragua, Santo Domingo, and Haiti. At the time all three of these Caribbean countries were occupied by American forces. The degree to which the seizures were militarily and financially inspired was considered in each instance. The financial interest of America in each of the countries could hardly be questioned. A consideration of the results of the occupations revealed the elimination of revolution but at the price of taking away the freedom of the press and the self-

determination of the respective peoples. The evidence presented would seem to confirm an opinion of Edwin L. James quoted in the New York Times that American policy, as regarded by Europe, was one more of economic than military imperialism.⁷⁹ The issue, raised by the Federation in this instance, was the significance of this policy for the nation's purpose and destiny.

The peak of Federation interest in the Far East for the post-war period was reached in 1925. During that year issue after issue of the Bulletin carried discussions of the social problems of India, China, and Japan. The social situations in these countries were considered in the light of the diplomatic and missionary policies in operation there. Articles on the first-hand impressions of Ward were published and in great demand by The Nation, The World Tomorrow, Asia, The Christian Century, The New Republic, The Advocates, and Zion's Herald. Throughout his itinerary the secretary's lecture appearances at universities and among church groups were met with warm response. In Japan and China his courses of lectures were carried in English and Chinese newspapers, in some cases on the front pages.⁸⁰ Of his work in China, President M. J. Bowen of Nanking University said of the secretary:⁸¹

79. P. 1.

80. See SSB, March 15, 1925, 3; May 15, 1925, 4.

81. Quoted from The Christian Century in SSB, September 15, 1925, 3-4.

Dr. Ward has done a greater service to the cause of Christianity than any other man who has ever come from the West to China as a lecturer.

Perhaps the most pertinent of the international issues treated by the Federation, and also demonstrative of its general approach to these issues, was the situation in China. The Harding and Coolidge administrations backed with gunboats their emphatic demands for the maintenance of the "Open Door" policy in China and its corollary, extra-territoriality. An incident of momentous potentiality for international relations in China at the time was "the Shanghai Massacre," the shooting into an unarmed crowd of Chinese students and others by foreign police of the International Settlement in Shanghai in May, 1925. A general strike was precipitated in demonstration against the foreign elements. The rising national consciousness in China inspired by Sun Yat-Sen became more intolerant of the "Unequal Treaties," a term applied to agreements in which China conceded to other nations privileges, such as that of extra-territoriality, never ordinarily granted between equals.

The Federation was particularly concerned about the "Toleration clauses" in America's treaties with China which provided for the extension alike of trade and of the missionary enterprise. The Bulletin of October 1, 1925, was devoted to this problem. In practice, this policy provided for the protection by gunboats and marines of the missionaries

preaching the gospel of peace and love of Jesus. The consequence, of course, was condemnation by the Chinese of the missionary movement along with the diplomatic policy of America. The dependency of the Christian forces in China upon foreign governments, and the connotation of force with the latter, became so serious during this period that Ralph E. Diffendorfer of the Board of Foreign Missions, an active member of the Federation, was moved to comment:⁸²

I am about to recommend to my board that if the missionaries cannot get along without the protection of extraterritoriality, they had better get out of China altogether.

For the Federation that was the step required in that hour.

The foreign entanglements of the United States were not given intense consideration again by the Bulletin until 1927 when new developments in Mexico, Nicaragua, and China brought forth another series of issues on the nation's foreign relations. The presentation this time reflected the growing concern over war which developed during the last half of the twenties. The discussions of China and Mexico were introduced as "two big issues" which the country had to face if it were to contribute "to a warless world by keeping ourselves out of war."⁸³

The situation in China was brought to the front for further consideration as a result of the new demands of the

82. Ibid., 4.

83. SSB, January 1, 1927, 1.

Nationalist movement for equality with the foreign power. Much of the credit for the rapid mobilization of a national consciousness in China fell to the Kuomintang, or people's party, which at that time was strongly inspired by the memory of Sun Yat-Sen, China's George Washington. By 1927 its influence was strong enough to enable the Cantonese to take over control of the British concessions in Hankow and Kiukiang. Desiring a settlement of this dispute between the East and the West on the basis of justice rather than force, the Federation recommended the writing of "new treaties based on equality and reciprocity" to replace the existing unjust and coercive "Unequal Treaties," lest the last vestige of this country's friendship with China be destroyed.⁸⁴

The issue on the Mexican conflict dealt with the questions of American property rights and religious liberty for the Roman Catholic Church in that country.⁸⁵ The former issue found the Mexican Government deadlocked with the major American oil companies with holdings in Mexico over the enforcement of the new Mexican oil law which provided for the reverting of company property to the Government in those cases in which the companies failed to apply for "confirmatory concessions." The oil companies refused to make such application and the dispute ensued with the United States State Department, pressed by business interests, fighting

84. SSB, February 1, 1927, 4.

85. SSB, January 1, 1927.

against what it called a "confiscatory policy." The religious liberty issue grew out of the effect of the enforcement of a special Act of the Mexican Government which limited considerably the expression of the Roman Catholic faith. In both instances, the Bulletin confined itself to a presentation of important data which would help its readers to form judgments of their own.

In the following issue, that of January 15, 1927, the Bulletin made clear the Federation's position on the Mexican issue in presenting an account of the recent re-occupation of Nicaragua. Interestingly, the Federation linked the Nicaraguan incident with the Mexican one; to quote:⁸⁶

Our intervention in Nicaragua is a two-edged sword. It cuts forward into Nicaragua, but backward, with sharper blade, into Mexico.

Its conclusion was based on the Administration's statement of reasons for interference in Nicaragua, one of which was to look out for the "stability" of Central America. Mexico with her rising nationalism was aspiring to leadership in Central America. At the same time she was at loggerheads with the United States over the oil law. American fears that Mexico would carry her non-favorable attitude towards this nation into Central America were said to be "as good as admitted" by the Administration.⁸⁷ The final question

86. P. 4.

87. Loc. cit.

posed by the Federation with regard to general American policy in the Caribbean was:⁸⁸

How are we going to get rid of the idea that other people exist in order that we may do them good and make them do right?

Agitation by the Federation on the invasion of Nicaragua was carried over into the next quadrennium inasmuch as American forces continued to occupy the country until 1933. The larger issue of imperialism was shortly to become one of the dominant issues of the Federation program.

More significant to the Federation than the consideration of any one of its dominant emphases of the post-war era -- war, free speech, American foreign policy, and the Russian question -- was the interrelation of these issues and their bearing upon the quest for a new social order. In 1928 the Christian Century carried an article by the secretary in which he reviewed the current challenge of the social situation to religion and stressed the importance of understanding the interrelated character of the social problem facing the church. In this article the secretary stated in one question the comprehensiveness of the problem with which the Federation had wrestled throughout the previous decade. Summarily, he asked:⁸⁹

88. SSB, February 15, 1927, 1.

89. "A Social Strategy For Religion," May 3, 1928. Reprinted in ATY, 9-10.

Do they (leaders of religion) understand the relation of foreign investments to a big navy program, of the enormous increase of unearned income and unsocial property to the rise of militarism and the suppression of free speech among a friendly and freedom-loving people?

J. Endorsement of the General Conference of 1924

In spirit and content the question phrased above symbolized the work of the Federation during the preceding quadrennium. Its entire program for that four-year period had been framed to fulfill the assignment given it by the General Conference of 1924. Not since the Federation was first authorized by the executive agency to rally the forces of the church to its social mission had the General Conference endorsed the work of the agency with the assurance with which it stated its endorsement in 1924. The pertinent paragraphs of the Conference resolution were conscientiously received by the Federation and reprinted in the Bulletin and various pamphlets to inform all its membership of the challenging opportunity with which it had been presented. The resolution read:⁹⁰

Whereas, It is imperative that there be some authorized agency in the Methodist Episcopal Church for the purpose of raising before the Church the question of the social implications of the gospel of Jesus; therefore

90. GCJ, 599.

Resolved, That we commend the Methodist Federation for Social Service for its splendid activities in carrying on the work specified herein.

In 1928, at the seat of the General Conference in Kansas City, the Federation celebrated its twentieth anniversary. In the opening address, Francis J. McConnell spoke on "The Social Movement in Religion -- Where Is It Going?" In the course of the address, the program of the Federation was designated, by way of contrast to the social programs of the Federal Council and World Interchurch Movement, as one of "raising disturbing questions -- ahead of time."⁹¹ This was the concept of the Federation's role, which evolved out of the assignment of the General Conference of 1924, that was to determine the policy of the Federation as long as McConnell and Ward were in office.

K. Evanston Conferences of 1922 and 1926

The vanguard-activity of the Federation within the church was stimulated by its Conferences on Christianity and the Economic Order, which were held in Evanston, Illinois. The first met in 1922 and the second in 1926. It is believed that the first of these Conferences marked the occasion of "the first church gathering in this country to be devoted entirely to the discussion of the ethical aspects of economics."⁹²

91. Reported in SSB, June 15, 1928, 1.

92. "Are We Pioneers?", SSB, February 15, 1928, 4.

Far more important than the subject matter of the Conference was the feeling of kinship it fostered between men of similar social convictions at a time when progressives were being persecuted and isolated from the majority of their fellow-men because of their beliefs. An issue of the Bulletin following the Conference frankly admitted that this was the outstanding value of the Conference. It commented:⁹³

More than any other one thing the Evanston Conference revealed the value of a closer fellowship among crusaders for a Christian world order. The sense of isolation of those who are paying a price is found much more trying than the most bitter opposition.

It further stated that the Federation was to be looked upon as a "fellowship" in which one receives inspiration from others and in turn does his utmost to encourage and support them. In fact, this issue of the Bulletin represented the first of the mid-monthly numbers which was to be issued for the purpose of fostering this sense of comradeship. The satisfaction of this need has been one of the chief functions of the Federation ever since.

The 1926 Conference foretold the unreserved radicalism which was to mark the future presentation of Federation material. The immorality of the economic order was no longer questioned; it was denounced. The present economic order was accused of destroying freedom, justice, and fraternity.

⁹³. October 15, 1923, 3.

No one stated more concisely the immorality of the economic order at this Conference than the secretary whose address, "The Nature of the Acquisitive Society," was condensed and printed as Vital Questions Leaflet, No. 6. The secretary denounced the method and motive of the economic order uncompromisingly as utterly incompatible with the ethical teachings of religion. Its method was competitive and thereby depended upon "the spirit of strife." It glorified "the rule of the strong." The end of this "acquisitive" economic order was "the attainment of material riches." It asserted that "productive efficiency depends upon the cultivation of greed." Thus the essential features of the present economic order were rejected. The two things the minister of the gospel could do in the face of such convictions were to refuse to have anything to do with "luxury and unearned income" himself and to get "people to see the need of change." The subject matter of this Evanston Conference was reflected in the reports of the Federation to the next General Conference. Increasingly, "the economic order" was to become a popular phrase in the Federation's vocabulary.

L. The General Conference of 1928

For the Federation the issues demanding immediate consideration were clearly drawn. Supported by the previous Conference's assignment to "raise questions" and earnestly committed to a vanguard policy, the Federation submitted its

reports to the General Conference of 1928. They were provocative and uncompromising. Four issues were presented for consideration: war, unearned income and property, free speech, and church and labor. While three of these items did not represent new issues for the Conference to consider, the report on unearned income and property marked the first emphatic appearance of that controversial item.⁹⁴

The one point at which the Conference registered advance, in the eyes of the Federation, was in the matter of war. Its actions concerning military training and the use of the agencies of the church in preparation of war were commended as showing that in the four years since 1924 "the conscience of Methodism has become both keener and more intelligent." "The point at which emphasis must be placed for the next four years" was, as anticipated, in the newly-raised issue of property and income, the item which the Federation considered "basic to all other issues." Of primary significance was the continuation of the Conference's recognition of the Federation for another four years, for the Federation's eyes were already on the future. It was preparing itself "to reckon realistically with the basic social institutions, the state and economic order," and to play its part in making them serve the common good.⁹⁵ The Bulletin

94. See SSB, May 1, 1928, for content of Reports.

95. Op. cit., June 15, 1928, 12.

of November 15, 1928, announced that such a program had received the official approval of the Executive Committee and General Council at the Annual Meeting.⁹⁶

96. P. 1.

CHAPTER VII

EMPHASES IN THE DEPRESSION-PERIOD

The decade which followed the crash of 1929 was so prolific of national and international developments and of such significance for the Federation that it is virtually impossible to treat adequately all of them within the scope of this study. One has only to call to mind the New Deal, the N.I.R.A., the Wagner Act, the great development of the labor movement, the Liberty League, the Supreme Court fight, important social legislation, the development of reactionary and progressive blocks at the 1936 elections, Labor's Non-Partisan League, the Senate investigation of munition manufacturing and of violations of civil liberties, the Chicago Massacre, increased lynchings, Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and Mayor Hague -- to comprehend how speedily and in what directions national forces developed during the period. Internationally, the conquest of Ethiopia, fascist invasion of Spain and China, the failure of the League of Nations, oil land appropriation in Mexico, fascist developments in Brazil and Quebec, the rape of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia by Germany, the fall of France, the Anti-Communist Pact, increased Roman Catholic reaction, the United Front in France and Spain, and the new Soviet Constitution -- all recall the swift-moving international scene. The Federation taxed its energy and resources to the limit in an effort to keep abreast

of all of them. The most one can do here by way of review is to indicate the impact of these incidents on the organization of the Federation program. Humbled by the magnitude of its task, the Federation paused numerous times during the period to reflect upon its position and direction in the social struggle of the depression. For these momentary periods of reflection the historian is indeed grateful, for the consequence each time was the designation of what issues should receive primary attention for the ensuing period.

A. The Economic Order

As suggested at the close of the last chapter the Federation came away from the General Conference convinced that the area of profit, property, and income was the immediate one upon which ethical thinking from a Christian perspective had to be focused. In a flyer printed about that time describing the purpose and program of the Federation, "the economic order" was designated as the "heart" of the problem of realizing the ideal society. It was defined as "those activities and relationships by which are secured the material goods necessary for the maintenance and development of life." Discovering how that order might become Christian in its form, motives, end, and spirit was designated as the "main field of inquiry and action" for the ensuing period.

The philosophy that was to undergird the Federation's educational campaign on the economic order was suggested in

intensive treatments of the subject by the secretary in two books written by him about this time, Our Economic Morality and the Ethic of Jesus in 1929 and Which Way Religion? in 1931, both of which were book-of-the-month selections of the Religious Book Club, Inc. The former presented a keen analysis of economic institutions and processes. The thesis of the book was that Western civilization is desperately in need of an ethic of brotherhood and a dynamic which would make such an ethic potent. Religion was held to be ineffective in supplying that need because it does not challenge the unethical character of Western civilization and because it does not influence human behavior in those economic relationships in which men are most tempted to be unethical. The economic order was accused of being in direct conflict with everything that is central to the ethic of Jesus. Modern industry worships both the power and the privilege which money guarantees; it destroys brotherhood by its power and privilege. Its antiquated individualism was not adequate to meet the social and moral needs of an industrial process which makes economic interdependence inevitable. In an industrial society individualism merely sanctions the exploitation of the weak by the strong. The convenient doctrine of laissez-faire, the dogma that selfish and social interests are ultimately identical, the effort to make competition respectable without changing its essential nature, the attempt to make inequality of privilege sufferable by creating such an

abundance that inequality will not be too noticeable -- all these efforts, efforts to escape an ethical alternative, were analyzed and refuted with trenchancy and skill by Ward. Either men will bring industrial society under the domination of the ethical ideals of brotherhood of Jesus or society will be reduced to anarchy by international and class wars. Throughout the volume the economic order fared badly wherever reflected against the ethical demands of Christianity. One closes the book convinced that unless the human values stressed in the gospel of Jesus are restored to their proper place, the established order will shortly come tumbling down about him.

The second volume appeared two years later. Basically, it brought into focus the crucial issue of whether religion is to transform the world or be transformed by the world. Is religion actually to set the moral tone of society or will religion itself take its tone from the pressure exerted on it by our economic life? Essentially its outlook was unchanged from that of the earlier study. The real question, Ward puts forth, is not whether Jesus still has value for life, but how far the world, and first of all the churches, will go in developing the ethic of Jesus -- an ethic of service and sacrifice as over against the dominant note of economic self-interest and exploiting power. He observed that, while there was a marked growth of moral judgment concerning war and militarism following the first world war, there was

no corresponding growth of moral criticism of the economic order in whose soil were embedded the roots of war.

B. The Third Evanston Conference

Another factor that helped to clear the air for an intense consideration of the ethical nature of the economic order was the third quadrennial Evanston Conference held in 1930. Like the previous ones, this Conference had a unique feature. No preacher's voice was heard from the speaker's platform, save that of the presiding officer. Conscious that the social movement in the church had thus far been a preacher's affair, the Federation turned the platform over to the layman to air his views on the economic order. Outstanding spokesmen for the existing order were invited to present constructive criticisms of the Federation's policies and statements to previous General Conferences. Included on the program were J. E. Edgarton, President of the National Association of Manufacturers, Harry A. Wheeler of the First National Bank, Chicago, and Edward T. Lee, Dean of the John Marshall Law School. With such a set-up it is not surprising that the papers presented "stirred up a veritable hornet's nest of discussion." Beyond question, it was the liveliest of the three Conferences. All shades of economic opinion were reflected. A banker defended the profit motive and advocated the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. A manufacturer insisted that workers

should be paid only on the basis of their ability to produce with no regard for their needs or their families. A lawyer for whom strikes spelled violence upheld the use of the injunction against strikes. On the other hand "a large majority" of the preachers present contended for the need of a new economics of plenty in contrast to the old economics of scarcity, "an economics of planning, coordination, control and measurement, socially governed and directed toward social ends."¹

The leadership of the Federation came away from the Conference "with two strong impressions." First, that little reliance could be placed on the business men in the job of getting a new social order; for, when their attitude was not "the bourbon 'after us the deluge,'" it was "the 'let be' of the classical economics." The second impression was that there actually existed a small band of Methodist preachers who were "consciously through with capitalism."² While a spirit of tolerance for opposing views would seem to have prevailed throughout the Conference, the wide gulf between the attitudes of the two factions on the adequacy of the economic order forecast potential frictions which would flare up in a blaze of fury at a future date.

1. SSB, September 15, 1930, 1-2.

2. Loc. cit.

C. The Depression Series

Although the Federation throughout the mid-twenties had harped on the false prosperity of the period, few in the nation were evidently ready to heed its voice. When the stock market suddenly crashed in 1929, the majority of the people were caught unprepared. Fortunes large and small of business men and truck-drivers alike were destroyed. Bewildered by the downward rush, the leadership of the nation refused to believe that an end had come to a perfect day. Financial and political leaders insisted that nothing serious could happen to America. For a year this psychology dominated the country. Assurances were voluminous but no program of concerted action was forthcoming from the Capitol -- with one exception.

To prevent the cruel liquidation of life insurance companies, savings banks, and railway systems required by the iron laws of capitalist production and distribution, President Hoover threw himself into the breach with a project for sustaining the gigantic structure of the economic system. On his recommendation Congress created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation with a capital of two billion dollars and gave it general authority to make loans to banks, life insurance companies, railroads, and the like. The project was not snubbed by the financial interests of the country. More than five thousand loans were made within

a few months.

The Federation observed these developments with consternation. Along with Will Rogers it might have been said to have inquired that now that the bankers had received their dole, had not the time for the starving unemployed come? Just the same, the President took a firm stand against Congressional projects for federal appropriations for the relief of the distress among the jobless throughout the nation.³ It was on this point that the Federation laid its stress. Beginning with the November issue in 1930, the Bulletin devoted its research number each month for a period of eight months to consideration of the various aspects of the complex and deplorable problem of unemployment.

The crucial issue for the Federation was the assumption of responsibility for an unemployment program. In the November research number the Bulletin surveyed the positions and programs of government, business, labor, and religion on the unemployment programs. Little was found worthy of commendation with regard to governmental efforts. Evidence pointed to the juggling of census returns on the number of unemployed to the extent that the official figure of 2,298,588 for June, 1930, was over two million short of other reliable estimates. By way of program, the administration killed all of the Wagner bills dealing with the

3. See the Beards, RAC, II, 732.

problem except the one calling for better employment statistics. The government's emergency construction enterprises were observed and criticized because of their job-staggering policy. As a substitute, the Bulletin suggested that, instead of jobs, incomes be staggered, taking for the relief of unemployment "half of all incomes above \$10,000 and below that proportionately down to the comfort level."⁴

The other institutions were similarly examined and their shortcomings exposed. Business was chided for its double-talk on the jobless situation: voicing pessimism within its private journals and optimism in its public utterances. Violations of business's pledge to the President not to reduce wages were pointed out. Labor, too, was chided; for directing its appeal for help in time of crisis to the employers instead of the laborers and also for failing to endorse compulsory unemployment insurance. Finally, the church was given recognition for its stern pronouncements on the social situation. Practical church projects for alleviation of immediate hardships were suggested and then, "getting down to bed rock," the basic questions were put:⁵

Beyond these measures, is the church responsible for the development of a social order which will as a matter of course prevent unemployment? And as a means to that end, must it discover causes and work for their removal?

4. November 1, 1930, 1-2.

5. Ibid., 4.

Another number in the series treated the world-scope of the economic depression and the responsibility of the United States thereto. The question of the relation of the war-debt issue to the international crisis was raised and the effect of the cancellation of the debts on the situation was pondered and eventually supported. The bearing of the nation's new tariff on Germany's reparation payments was also revealed. The inadequacy of the handling of the international crisis by nations acting independently was criticized and world-wide planning, based on a world-wide ethic of economic morality was advocated.⁶

Realizing that the nation was not likely to embrace with maturity the larger questions of national and world economic planning when in 1931 it had yet to implement elementary provisions for the unemployed, the Bulletin followed with an issue devoted to the problem: "Can Legislation Solve Employment?" It was assumed at the outset that there was general agreement on the requirements of a comprehensive unemployment program for the country; namely, (1) the collection of the facts, (2) a national system of labor exchanges, (3) unemployment insurance, and (4) the stabilization of industry. Unfortunately, the Bulletin's survey of the progress made to date in each of these areas revealed the appalling fact that little of practical significance

6. December 1, 1930, 1-4.

had been done. The remainder of the issue was given to a consideration of the attitude of various groups toward compulsory unemployment insurance. For some, such insurance was considered a dole; for others, a worthy preventive; for still others, a sop to ease the public conscience; for the Federation the value of compulsory unemployment insurance would be determined by the degree to which it contributed to the control of the business cycle.⁷

One of the last of the depression series dealt with the problem of the recurring business cycle. The supposedly uncontrollable nature of the cycle was examined and denied. The cause of the cycle was considered and Hobson's theory of overproduction and underconsumption was given much weight. The cure for the cycle was seen to lie in economic and social planning. The question of leadership for the social ideal of planning was then raised and hope was placed in the churched middle class because of its historic "spiritual and social ancestry" and its "resources and technical skill." If this group of the population refused to stir itself, then hope was seen to rest finally in the necessities of the situation, "the perception that the present economic scheme of things is breaking down."⁸

While the Bulletin series on the depression was full

7. February 1, 1931, 1-4.

8. March 1, 1931, 1-4.

of flashes of insight too numerous to discuss here, it is hoped that the brief outline of the material presented above has been sufficient to convey the general tenor of the Federation's approach to the economic crisis. Interestingly, although committed to the ideal of socio-economic planning, the Federation's presentation of the problem in this instance displayed an amazing tolerance for half-way measures of reform, a tolerance that was shortly to be lacking in future deliberations on the economic question.

D. Demand for Action Revitalized

Simultaneous with the series of Bulletins on the depression there arose within the Federation a new demand for social action motivated by a "sense of urgency in the presence of crisis."⁹ This revitalized emphasis would seem to have been ignited by a spontaneous and unofficial Call to Action Conference held in Chicago in April, 1932, in which Federation members participated. The delegates were unofficial seekers of a way out of the crisis and as ministers they were looking for specific areas of action for the local church. Social in spirit, the reports presented expressed an acute awareness of the class struggle involved in the crisis and a deep sensitivity that the clergy by and large were "members of the privileged class." Responsibility was

9. SSB, May 15, 1932, 1.

accepted for stimulating a "spirit of protest and revolt within the breasts of impoverished men and women" and loyalty of the church to "the existing order" was summarily condemned. The urge "to do something," in the eyes of the Federation, "marked the Conference and made it 'different.'"¹⁰

That such a conference was called so close to the convening of General Conference would seem to suggest that the radical element in the church anticipated little encouragement for its forces at the larger meeting. If so, such a premonition was justified in the eyes of the Federation. The General Conference of 1932 in the issue of the Bulletin following received but one paragraph of comment. In the face of the crisis, the Federation agreed with an editorial in the Christian Century of June 8, 1932, which observed that the Conference "flickered out in futility." Consequently, the Bulletin restated its conviction all the more emphatically that the "greater responsibility" for social action would have to rest upon "individuals who have any sort of a niche in the church." The "revolutionary tradition" of Christianity demanded expression. Of necessity, therefore, the Bulletin felt committed at that time to give its "space to suggestions for action" rather than to a review of the social pronouncements adopted by the General Conference.¹¹

10. Loc. cit.

11. June 15, 1932, 1.

In this regard the Bulletin began to carry accounts of local constructive work being done by pastors for the unemployed. Likewise space was given to the reporting of progress being made by the Christian Social Action Movement which had grown out of the Chicago Call to Action Conference. The Bulletin urged the merging of its local social service commission with the new movement wherever possible, a movement which was "making no bones about condemning capitalism."¹²

E. The All-Out Attack on Capitalism

It was but a natural step for the Federation, an organization dedicated to the pursuit of a new social order, to move, in the face of the continued depredation of the masses during the depression, to a position of vigorous denunciation of the capitalist economy which it held responsible for the crisis. Two incidents can reasonably be credited with having accelerated the transition to this position in the early thirties. One was the visit of Ward to Russia in 1932 where he was impressed by the progress being made in that social experiment for a new social order in contrast to the degeneration of the economic order of the Western world. The other factor was the near-death of the Federation in 1933 as a result of financial difficulties. While the former factor was of more implicit than explicit significance

12. Loc. cit.

for the transition to an all-out attack on capitalism; the bearing of the latter incident upon the new position was expressly stated in the fall of 1933.

Although the Federation had been in a dire financial position many times before and had been able to maintain operation only through the sacrificial service of the staff and the generous donations of a few of the members, the financial condition of the organization in the fall of 1933 was worse than anything it had previously experienced. The November Bulletin expressed the surprise of the staff that the Federation was "still alive" and credited its survival to the financial assistance of a Congregational layman. It saw its financial predicament to grow out of the inability of the majority of the members in a period of economic crisis to meet customary expenditures and at the same time support worthy causes. Essentially, therefore, the blame for its financial embarrassment rested upon the fluctuation of the decadent capitalist economy of which it was a part.¹³

A consequence of far-reaching importance for the Federation came out of this experience. It was its decision to give its all to the abolition of "a dying capitalism" that was seeking to prolong its life. On no other basis could the "organization justify its continued existence." The Bulletin continued:¹⁴

13. SSB, November, 1933, 1.

14. Loc. cit.

If we are to live, it must be on the basis of a vital part in this struggle between an old and a new world. If this is to be our last year we must put something into the record that will count in the future.

In this spirit, the new "job" of the Federation was drawn up and stated as follows:¹⁵

Carrying on our original purpose of working through education and cooperation, our task is, by analysis of the current situation in the light of the ethical principles of our gospel, to

1. Demonstrate the increasing inability of the capitalist economy to provide economic security.
2. Show its growing destruction of its own values -- initiative, freedom, property.
3. Clarify the outline of the society we both need and desire; e.g., it must be classless, provide plenty and development for all, etc.
4. Critically analyze the methods available for organizing a new order -- e.g., a planned economy; maximum and minimum income; the obligation of socially useful labor; universal social insurance; universal participation in control, etc.
5. Analyze and evaluate methods of social change; e.g., force and violence; confiscation; dictatorship, etc.

This five-point task was devised to satisfy the needs of three types of members. The first two provisions were

15. Ibid., 2.

designed to appeal to those who knew something was wrong with capitalism but did not know what. The third category was designed to appeal to those who understood the inadequacy of capitalism and were through with it but did not know exactly what kind of a society they wanted in its place. The fourth and fifth provisions above were designed for those still farther along in their thinking who were ready to discuss the technique, the strategy, for getting over from the old to the new social order.¹⁶

The evolution of the emphasis of the Federation from social service through the teens to social justice in the twenties and finally to social transformation in the thirties brought up the question of the adequacy of the name of the organization for its wider objectives. It was decided that the original name had too much historical value to be discarded at this time in favor of a new name that would better fit the facts. Instead, it was proposed that a declaratory sentence be adopted to be printed always after the name that would make clear what the Federation stood for. This proposal was accepted at the annual meeting and the following sentence was submitted to the general membership for adoption or rejection: "An organization which seeks to abolish the profit system and to develop the classless society based upon the obligation of mutual service."¹⁷ The

16. Loc. cit.

17. Loc. cit.

measure was approved and the Bulletin began to carry the statement at its masthead in the fall of 1934. Another evidence of the new trend was the changing of the name of the periodical, by vote of the officers of the Federation, to The Social Questions Bulletin, effective in the November, 1933 issue.¹⁸

F. "Crisis Leaflets"

The all-out attack on capitalism was inaugurated by the issuance of a series of pocket-size leaflets, which were known as Crisis Leaflets and distributed after the fashion of the tracts of the earlier Methodists. Prepared under the slogan, "He who runs can read," the leaflets were designed to appeal to the masses of headline-habituated readers of the nation as they went to and fro about their daily routine. These leaflets proved to be one of the most effective educational projects of the Federation. They were handed out like tracts; printed in church bulletins; mailed by preachers to their members; sold at literature tables at churches and conferences; sold to students by hand-picked men in seminaries; and used as a basis for discussion in church and school classes.¹⁹ They were printed in three sets of six each.

18. In references dated November, 1933 and following the Federation Bulletin will be referred to by the symbol SQB instead of SSB.

19. See SQB, December, 1934, 4.

The first set was intended to inform the reader of the nature of the economic crisis; specifically, the responsibility of the collapse of the profit system for the depression and the inadequacy of any measures which would merely tend to prop up the old economy. The six issues of the set, known as the Crisis Leaflets proper, appeared in the following order: "Do You Know What Has Happened?," "Do You Want Fascism?," "Can the Profit System Be Repaired?," "No Way Out," "Why?," and "Do You Want These Things?" While the content of the set is too compact and rich in insight to be treated exhaustively here, some flashes of the general material will be presented by way of illustration.

The first pointed out that the profit system had broken down and was destroying the very essentials the jobless lacked: the burning of coffee, the dumping of produce, the plowing under of cotton, and the rotting of fruit and vegetables upon the ground. Moreover, the system "that taught your fathers to teach you that it is wicked to waste," was wasting not only the necessities of life while many starved but also "the lifeblood of society," the intellect of the college-trained youth who were reduced to working as attendants in filling stations and clerks in stores. The New Deal signified "official recognition that capitalism cannot run on its own power." "If it goes at all it is only by the help of the state." State capitalism was replacing private enterprise, supposedly the genius of the economic

order. The second leaflet treated the fascist potentialities of the Roosevelt administration in the light of comparable developments in Italy and Germany which were keeping "the dying capitalist system alive by regulating both capital and labor." Besides the employing of "the power of the state to save the profit system," other fascist tendencies were seen in the increasing lynchings of Negroes, the clubbing of reds and throwing them in jail, and the warning by the President of workers not to strike regardless of the injustices of many industrial situations. Another of the set, "No Way Out," dealt with the frustration of the desires of the American people in the current crisis. Statistics were presented to demonstrate that, while the people wanted security, the profit system was destroying it; while they desired a higher standard of living, living standards were going down; while everyone wanted education, they were getting less; and, finally, while the American people did not want war, the government was preparing for it. It was concluded that there was "no way out" of these contradictions "under the profit system."

The second set, the "Way Out" Leaflets, advocated the substitution of social-economic planning for the collapsing profit system. The ~~six~~ leaflets were released in the following order: "A Planned Economy," "Plenty for All," "Security for All," "What Does It Cost?," "Property for All," and "Freedom for All." After the first leaflets of

the set had demonstrated the abundance of the nation's goods and the difference that planning would make in their distribution, the leaflet, "What Does It Cost?" considered two of the essential conditions that a planned order would require. Above all, a planned society had to be "built upon the principle of everybody working at some job necessary to the well-being of society." The negative side of this principle was that "those who won't work can't eat." Jobs would mean more than just "pay"; they would mean "services -- to each other and to future generations." Besides socially useful labor, another condition had to prevail if social-economic planning were to be successful; namely, that, if everybody were to have enough, no one could "be allowed to have too much." This "principle of maximum income" required that those who were strong must not take from the weak; this was "part of the price of a planned society." Thus, "exploitation and the separate classes it creates" would be abolished. The fifth leaflet of the set considered the question of the effect of planning upon property. Social ownership, as distinguished from government ownership, was to have priority over private property. A planned social economy would not succeed "unless society owns and administers the production plant and the machinery of distribution." Social ownership, unlike government enterprises run by the politicians to the benefit of the capitalists, would place control of the economy in the hands of the people. Ultimately, most of the

people would have more property, not less, through planning. The only ones to lose under the system were those with a great estate. In place of vast estates, rich owners would be able to gain "the satisfaction of participating in a great creative enterprise." In answer to the question of freedom raised by such a procedure, the last of the set of leaflets, "Freedom for All," was prepared to demonstrate that social-economic planning did not mean being "goose-stepped by a bureaucracy and bossed by a few experts." Political freedom without economic freedom was proclaimed a farce. Social ownership would include economic freedom, the opportunity for "people to participate in the control of the things on which our lives depend," and thereby would extend democracy to the whole of life. Freedom to vote was exchanged for "freedom to participate actively in the management and to choose and change the executives." Such freedom, however, could not be won without a price nor could it be maintained unless the people were everlastingly alerted to the constant "tendency toward bureaucracy."

As has been seen, the first series of the Crisis Leaflets dealt with the breakdown of capitalism and the second series considered the form of the economy that was to replace capitalism and what it offered. The third series treated the question of the method of social change to be employed in moving over from the collapsing profit system to a planned and planning economy. There is evidence that the

organization "pondered long" as to whether this subject "could be effectively handled in the small space of a tract." Nevertheless, the response received from the issuance of the first two sets demanded that the job be undertaken. The first of this series, "A Man-Size Job," sized up the task involved in uprooting the old system and challenging the enemy. The second considered "Who's Going to Do It?" and concluded that the job of transition would and could not be done by the "big boys" but only by the folk who had the power to do it -- "the workers by hand and brain." The next, "A Bit at a Time Won't Work" treated the theory of gradualism and supported it, "but only after change in control." The fourth of the series, "Compensation -- What Do You Mean?" projected the questions: How do those who have, get it?, Can they possibly use it?, Shall we cancel their claim -- and give them real compensation -- creative work, a good living, and security? The next to last of the series, "The Right To Live," considered the question of violence and noted that it was "a law of history that violence from below is reaction to violence from above" and suggested that while that law could not be changed, its operation could be controlled by assuring the masses of their right to both assert their connections and to live by peaceful means. The final issue of the Crisis Leaflets, "More Democracy -- Not Less," deflated the baseless notion that the people were currently experiencing more democracy and carried the admonition not

to "go backward to a Mussolini" and state capitalism, but forward along "a hard road" to a planned and planning economy which would grant both economic and political democracy. The preparation of this final series was announced and a brief treatment of their general content appeared in the October, 1935 issue of the Bulletin.²⁰

G. Analysis of the New Deal

At the same time the Federation was preparing the Crisis Leaflets to be distributed to the general public through preachers and social agencies, it was conducting an intensive educational program on the significance of the New Deal for the economic order. Every issue of the Bulletin for fifteen consecutive months following the announcement of the Federation's all-out attack on capitalism in November, 1933, was devoted to an analysis of the New Deal program in all its various meanings. Among the topics discussed were its meaning for the farmer, for labor, for education, for peace, for the Negro, and for freedom.

The general philosophy running throughout the analytical attack of the New Deal program was intimated in the discussion of the Crisis Leaflets. The announcement of the New Deal program marked the turning of a page of history; above all, it gave "official recognition" to the fact that

20. P. 2-3.

"capitalism can no longer run on its own power." The country had now definitely entered the period of state capitalism. Involved in this development was the threat of fascism; for the use of state power to bolster up the failing capitalist economy was recognized as the economic essence of fascism. In terms of the class struggle, the New Deal represented the effort of the people of the lower middle class to save themselves from being crushed by the pressure of big business from above and of rising labor from below. Once the people realized that the effort was doomed to failure, their wrath would be vented upon the minority groups on whom they would attach the blame. The social strategy of the Federation in the face of this development was to educate as many of the middle class as possible to the shortcomings of the program and thereby to shorten the death throes of a dying capitalism and to minimize the emotional excesses that otherwise would be forthcoming. This was the dismal outlook the Federation held for the New Deal program in the fall of 1934.²¹

After a year of agitation against the administration's program, the Federation paused long enough from its attack to review the social-economic developments in the light of its earlier predictions. To its mind, the social situation had moved steadily in the direction described the year before. To date, regardless of "the surface ups and downs of

21. SQB, November, 1933, 1.

the New Deal," "the general trend" was against recovery. Unemployment, "the nemesis of the capitalist system," had increased more than a half a million over the past year. Living standards for the majority of the people were lower and, more tragic still, many were "getting used to it." The predicted conflict between the classes had moved "steadily into the field of direct action." Strikes accompanied by physical conflicts were increasing. "Lawless acts by agents of the government are multiplied and vigilante terrorism grows." "Equally obvious" was the anticipated drift to fascism. In addition to the developments indicated others had appeared. The big industrialists, through the National Association of Manufacturers and United States Chamber of Commerce, had organized intensive campaigns for anti-labor legislation and for endorsement of a sedition bill which would outlaw any communication of ideas "favoring basic social change." The passage of such legislation would eventuate in an American brand of fascism of the "New Deal, social welfare, type" which would aim first to outlaw Communists, then to smash labor unions, and finally to hush liberals who were trying to get social change. For the Federation leadership all this was "a picture of the disintegration of society" and "symptoms of the development of Fascism;" in brief, the price that had to be paid for the continuance of the profit system. To combat the incumbent economy effectively, nothing short of "a union of all the forces" that had declared

themselves against the profit system was seen as "imperative."²²

Equally emphatic was the conviction of the Federation that the New Deal administration was preparing to wage war. Tendencies in this direction were cited, such as the proposed war budget of 1935 of two and a half billion dollars and the unanimous opinion of the Supreme Court in the California conscientious objectors' case "that the individual is entitled to no mind and no conscience in regard to war." More significant still, the Federation disclosed, was the fact that both the drifts toward fascism and war had a common origin. They were "the fruit of capitalism's inability to solve its economic problems."²³

H. American League Against War and Fascism

The Federation's conviction of the tie-up between a dying capitalism and its fruits, fascism and war, led to an action that was the subject of much controversy. In accord with its utterance that the social situation required "a union of all forces" opposed to the continuance of the profit system, the Federation affiliated itself, by vote of its Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee in October, 1934, with the American League Against War and Fascism. Its explanation of its affiliation at the time was that the League was

22. SQB, December, 1934, 1-2.

23. Loc. cit.

the only anti-war organization of workers, farmers, and intellectuals which represented "a mass counter-offensive" against the war and fascist tendencies of the country.²⁴

The League recognized the economic base of war and its membership was dedicated to withdrawal from participation in serving the war machine. The action was not taken hastily. The Executive Committee of the Federation had had the League program before it and had gone over it point by point before voting to affiliate.²⁵

To be official, however, the action of the Committee had to be ratified by the Regional Conferences of the Federation. The fight to gain ratification was carried to the Regional Conferences during the fall and winter of 1935-36 by the secretary, who was also National Chairman of the League. Ratification was obtained in each instance but only after much debate, particularly at the Middle West Conference. The decision was had only at the price of a considerable loss of membership of the organization. This action was the first clear-cut demonstration of the determination of the Federation to hold to its deliberate radical line and to keep its flag out front in the social struggle regardless of the opposition. The organization became the only church group to affiliate with the League.

24. Loc. cit.

25. SQB, October, 1935, 3.

The nature of the dispute involved was revealed in the account of the Leaders' Retreat of Federation members held at Pittsburgh in September, 1935. The main question involved, it would appear, was the wisdom of joining in a united front on any issue with an organization containing Communist members who were committed to the use of violence. It was revealed that the action of the Federation had aroused widespread gossip throughout the church to the effect that its secretaries, Harry F. Ward and Winifred L. Chappell, were thereby Communists themselves.²⁶

Ward and Chappell admitted that there were Communists within the League but denied that it was controlled by them. The Bulletin pointed out that the League's policies were "determined by a democratically-constituted Annual National Congress and ad interim by a National Bureau, of which two-thirds of the members at present are non-Communist."²⁷ As to their own positions, the secretaries willingly stated them after it was agreed that their political views and political affiliations were their own business. With regard to the question of the justifiability of violence, Ward responded with a more concrete question: what position should the Federation take regarding violence? It was agreed that violence should be "prevented" because it was

26. SQB, October, 1935, 1.

27. Ibid., 3.

"so destructive of human society and of the Christian ideal."²⁸

Ensuing historical developments have led some to suspect that the League was eventually Communist-controlled if not already in 1935. George Hedley, for instance, in a chapter included in one of the volumes of The Interseminary Series, has labeled the League as "the most notable" of the liberal "Communist-controlled organizations."²⁹ Later the organization changed its name to the more positive American League for Peace and Democracy. After a long campaign for "collective security," Hedley notes, it disappeared altogether at the time of the Russo-German nonaggression pact in August, 1939. Hedley infers that the League was replaced by the isolationist American Peace Mobilization, a "Communist-inspired and Communist-controlled agency," "which suddenly in June, 1941, (when Hitler attacked Russia) became the interventionist American People's Mobilization."³⁰

Harry F. Ward denies these inferences. He contends that to conclude on ~~that~~ basis that the League was Communist-controlled is to fall victim to "the well-known fallacy that coincidence equates causation." That there was similarity on practical points between the League and the Communist Party, Ward argues, "no more proves C. P. control than

28. Ibid., 2.

29. In COM, edited by Randolph C. Miller, Chapter III, "The Anti-Opium League," 66.

30. Loc. cit.

similarity between their program and Roosevelt's at certain points." Actually, Ward continues, there were significant divergencies between the League program and Communist policy. First, whereas the Communists stood for the doctrine of "collective security," which Hedley erroneously credits to the League, the latter stood for a policy of "concerted action in particular situations." Second, the League adopted a position on neutrality relating to the war "which was almost opposite to that of the C. P." which led the latter to consider withdrawing from the organization. As it happened, the Communist minority weighed "a United Front" more important than that particular position and remained in the group. The Communist members, Ward adds, "recognized fully that a United Front position necessarily could not be a C. P. position." Finally, on another issue, the invasion of Finland, the League took a position squarely contrary to the Communist line. Ward, moreover, maintains that the Communist minority of two (of seven, at first, and later of fifteen) on the National Bureau of the League was more influenced than influential in formulating the program of the League.³¹

One qualified to speak with appreciable insight on the question of Communist control of the League is Roger N. Baldwin, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union. Well-known to have no sympathy with Communism, Baldwin was a

31. Letter to the Author, March 7, 1949.

member of the National Bureau of the League up to the time of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939 when he resigned at once because he did not want to have any further connection with any organization in which Communists participated since "they no longer were friends of democracy." Of Communist activity in the League Baldwin writes:³²

I went along with them (the Communists) in the two Leagues because I thought their support of those principles genuine and not dictated by Russian policy. I discovered they had always an ulterior purpose, but they did not permit that purpose to dominate the League. They were a minority, and the most active of the forces which made up the League. We could not have continued it without them and we always had to keep in mind their policies in framing ours. But in no sense did they control the League, unless control could be interpreted as consideration for their political line from which we could not too far depart without disruption. Disruption finally came because of that divergence, but there was never control in the sense that the Communist party imposed its policy on the rest of us prior to that time. They didn't even do it then, but the coalition had to fall apart.

The opinions of Hedley, Ward, and Baldwin on the question of Communist control of the League reflect the dispute occasioned within and without the Federation by the affiliation of the organization with the League in 1935. The action of the Federation remained a "live" issue and was carried into the General Conference of 1936 as ammunition for the aggressive anti-radical campaign which was

32. Letter to Author, March 14, 1949.

being organized during this period.

I. The "Red" Attack

Throughout 1936 the Federation was exposed to a vehement "red" attack that surpassed anything it had experienced in its history. The attack came from all directions, from within and without the church. A comprehensive summary of the attack was given in the Bulletin of May, 1936. Without the church, William Randolph Hearst figured prominently in the red-accusations. In the summer of 1935 he used Ralph M. Easley of the National Civic Federation in preparing a series, "Rid the Methodist Episcopal Church of 'Red' Incubus." Easley played a similar role during the Steel Strike of 1919, it will be recalled. This time he cherished the desire that the coming General Conference would "deal with the McConnell-Ward-Chappell radical aggregation without gloves." Then, in the Philadelphia Inquirer a columnist, Samuel Crowther, deduced that the Federation's demand that the people should have much more property than they had involved the break-up of the family and the taking away of all private property. He was anxious to learn why the Methodist Church allowed itself to be exploited by such Communist doctrine.³³

Probably the most conscientious and widely-received

33. "The Red Baiters and the Methodists," 1.

attack from outside the church was that of Rembert Gilman Smith, a preacher of the Methodist Church South. His "Methodist Reds," an attractively-bound pamphlet which sold for twenty-five cents, ran into two editions and was distributed from Maine to California among units of the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, and other patriotic organizations besides bishops, ministers, and laymen of both main branches of Methodism.³⁴ Pointing out that "the Methodist reds" held that "the profit motive is not morally valid" and that they were seemingly attempting to make organized religion "a stimulant to slaughter," Smith suggested that the Federation be known as the "Marxist Federation for Social Strife." He advocated the return of the church to the spreading of its "only function", "the spreading of real (personal) religion."³⁵ He went further. He memorialized General Conference to declare "its unfeigned loyalty" to the 24th Article of Religion which states that the "riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title and possession of the same" and to require further that Methodist bodies "refrain from the advocacy" of Socialism or Communism since both were "plainly repugnant to the said Article of Religion."³⁶ The implication of Smith's reasoning here is that one could not be a

34. R. G. Smith, "Am I Really a Methodist Mussolini?," in The Christian Advocate, Pacific Edition, April 16, 1936, 13.

35. "Methodist Reds," 18.

36. Reprinted in The Christian Advocate, Pacific Edition, March 26, 1936, Editorial, "A Methodist Fascist," 3.

Methodist and a socialist at the same time, which clearly contradicts the position he maintained in his pamphlet; namely, that "a truly religious man can live in a monarchy, a democracy, under capitalism, or socialism."³⁷

Within the church, the attack was launched by two groups of laymen in the guise of campaigns directed toward the return to a purely personal religion. In Chicago the Conference of Methodist Laymen was organized in July, 1935, "for renewed emphasis on the spiritual phase of the life and the work of the church." Its chairman, Henry S. Henschen, and secretary, Wilbur Helm, were prominent Chicago bankers. Its position in brief was that the church should give herself to the building of character in individuals and leave social and economic questions alone. In the concrete, the underlying purpose of this group was the defense of the present order, as indicated in a press statement of its intentions:³⁸

We are going to demand settlement of the status of the Communist-influenced Methodist Federation for Social Service, and of clergymen and church officials who use their position to preach Socialism and Communism.

Similarly, out of the Southern California Conference appeared a Methodist Laymen's Committee with a hundred names on its letterhead which set for itself the job of getting

37. Op. cit., 10.

38. Quoted in SQB, May, 1936, 2.

the General Conference to "eradicate those sinister influences that have insinuated themselves into the church." Special reference was made to the church agencies that had to do with the training of youth. The Committee also memorialized the General Conference to correct the over-emphasis being placed on the social gospel at the expense of its "personal and spiritual aspects" and to remove from office those responsible for the education of the church youth who were indoctrinating the young people with "insidious propaganda."³⁹

J. The General Conference of 1936

This nation-wide attack on the Federation and its principles by supporters of the status quo came to a head at the General Conference of 1936. The conservatives went to Conference with a three-point program designed to stem the progressive tide. Their main objective as indicated in the memorial of the California laymen was to rid the Board of Education of its liberal leadership. A second objective was to prevent unofficial groups, such as the Federation, from use of the word Methodist. The third objective was to have the Federation investigated. This campaign was, to borrow the phrase of its instigator, "planned with thoroughness" well in advance of Conference.⁴⁰

39. Quoted in ibid., 3.

40. Quoted in ibid., 2.

The major objective was accomplished. The liberal leadership of the Board of Education was replaced by a conservative one. Edgar Blake, progressive episcopal head of the Board, was succeeded by Adna Leonard. At the same time Owen Geer and Blaine Kirkpatrick of the Young People's Department of this Board, as warned prior to Conference by F. C. Eiselin, corresponding secretary of the Board, in a letter, failed to receive reappointment; the grounds: "to relieve tension and promote greater harmony and efficiency." The effectiveness of the leadership and program of these two men in the eyes of the Federation was beyond question. During a period in which church and church school membership had decreased tremendously, Epworth League membership showed an increase of over 42,000. Geer and Kirkpatrick were both guiding figures in the Christian Social Action movement discussed earlier. Their social opinions brought about their dismissal, which, as surmised by Eiselen, came "as a terrible shock" to the young people of the church. Of this action, Blake said:⁴¹

Two of our most brilliant and effective leaders have been sacrificed to please a small group of Methodist reactionaries and the Hearst press.

The action was basically a case of appeasement of conservatives within the church at the price of principle.

41. Quoted in SQB, September, 1935, 1.

The second objective failed to get support. A report was adopted which declared that unofficial groups of Methodists cannot be denied the use of the word Methodist, which was said to include "all who belong to any branch of the Wesleyan family." The report requested that such organizations make their unofficial nature clear at all times.⁴² This the Federation had always done, but to remove any question of its status printed matter of the group thereafter carried the word unofficial after its title.

The third objective, to have the Federation investigated, was achieved insofar as a commission was appointed headed by Leonard, the conservative new chairman of the Board of Education, but the commission was instructed, as a result of an amendment by the Committee on the State of the Church, to investigate all of the unofficial agencies of the church. The head of the commission eventually called the secretary of the Federation to Philadelphia for this purpose, unaware of the added stipulation that all of the unofficial agencies were to be investigated. Ward pointed out the exact nature of the Conference instructions and requested that investigation of the Federation be deferred until all of the groups affected could be brought together. In view of the gigantic nature of such a task, the effort was

42. The report also expressed regret that some of the unofficial agencies of the church which saw fit to ally themselves with organizations opposed to war and fascism remained "strangely silent" on such matters as class war and Communism. GCJ, 508-509.

abandoned then and there.⁴³ Of the three objectives, therefore, only one was successful, but that undoubtedly was the most important because of the effect it would have upon the social content of the church literature.

Another proposal which, if passed, would have had a negative effect on the Federation asked for the appointment of a commission "to represent the church in the public announcement of the findings of the General Conference on social, economic and political questions" and "to interpret the attitude of the church toward such questions" between General Conference sessions.⁴⁴ Had this proposal not been rejected, the Federation might have become a superfluous agency within the church.

The platform adopted by the Conference convinced the Federation that the rejected "social oracle" of the church would have prophesied with a much meeker voice than itself. As far as the Federation was concerned, the statement of the General Conference on social and economic questions, issued at the height of the depression, was a maze of generalities. Its only significance, the Bulletin contended, was a negative one: "what it failed to say." Instead of taking a precise stand on the economic crisis, the Conference presented the statements of three differing Methodist

43. Interview with Secretary Ward, June 9, 1948.

44. GCJ, 509-510.

groups on the crisis without passing an ethical judgment on any of them. The pronouncement closed with the statement that because of "the difference of opinion," it did "not pass judgment on techniques" of the economic order. Then, in the next sentence, the statement contradicted itself by saying that the church "will test concrete proposals and systems by the Christian doctrine of personality."⁴⁵ In the face of desperate human need, the church thereby chose to remain neutral. The verdict of the Federation on this neutral position was that the church placed self-preservation, "a united Methodism," "before the needs of humanity" and thereby let Mammon have free sway.⁴⁶

After adjournment the Federation reflected upon the effect of the Conference upon its work. Above all, the agency concluded, the Conference had demonstrated that its work was more needed and necessary than ever before. The plight of the social order, the aggressive campaign of the forces of reaction, and the meekness of the church in the face of the situation necessitated a more energetic effort on the part of the Federation. The "only possible answer" to the aggressive program of the conservatives was "a more aggressive campaign in behalf of the social change required alike by the human situation and the imperatives of our

45. G.C.J., 517-18.

46. SQB, June, 1936, 1.

religion."⁴⁷

Primarily, then, the attack upon the Federation served to solidify its forces and to clarify its goal and position. The three-point plan that had been devised for General Conference now became its own charter. It consisted, first, in the rejection of the method of struggle for profit as the economic base of society. Second, the substitute would have to be the method of social-economic planning under democratic control, with social ownership of all things necessary to its successful operation, as the method by which the Christian principle of service and the development of personality could be progressively realized. Finally, the transition from the old to the new order was to be sought by education and discussion, not by violence. Not since the adoption of the Social Creed had the Federation felt its position so unequivocally. It recognized that its charter was "only a program, not a platform," which represented basic principles "to be discussed and worked out." An invitation was extended to all who wanted to go in the same direction, and even to those who were not sure, to join the crusade.⁴⁸

To help implement this program Charles C. Webber, who had been a student of Harry F. Ward at the Boston University School of Theology, was added to the staff as full-time field

47. Ibid., 3.

48. Loc. cit. See SQB, March, 1936, for full discussion of three-point program.

secretary. Since 1927 Webber had been Assistant Director of Field Work at Union Theological Seminary. He had also held several pastorates in labor and downtown communities in Denver, New York City, and the Pennsylvania coal fields. He had participated actively in industrial conflicts in the textile industry in Pennsylvania, the coal fields of Virginia, and elsewhere. His first responsibility was to take over the executive work of Winifred Chappell, who, physically exhausted by her many responsibilities, was forced to take a much-needed rest. Webber's main function, however, was to set up programs of educational social evangelism and action in local communities.

K. The Roman Catholic Church and Spain

The dread of reaction at home harbored by the Federation during the thirties was quickened by the reactionary movements in Europe which swept Hitler and Mussolini to power. Against the background of the incidents which brought these dictators to power the Federation was constantly weighing fascistic tendencies in America.

About the same time that the Federation was getting its three-point program under way in 1936, two new fascistic developments broke out in Europe that demanded close observation. One was the alignment of the Vatican with the dictatorships in a holy crusade against Communism. The other, a part of the first, was the uprising of the fascist Franco to

overthrow the young Spanish Republic.

The Spanish incident came close upon the heels of the formation of the "Popular Front" government which was voted into power in the February, 1936 election. The "Popular Front" was composed of all the progressive forces of the nation. The new government immediately set itself to the task of new measures of reform, some of which were the same as those opposed by the Catholic Church in 1933 when the Azano government was in power. One of the first challenges thrown down by the new Prime Minister, Casares Quiroga, was that to fascism. Speaking in this regard, Quiroga declared that "in its relations with fascism, the government is a belligerent."⁴⁹ This was a signal for the fascist forces to mobilize. In mid-July General Franco assumed command of the Moore and Legionnaires in Spanish Morocco and issued a manifesto to the army and the nation to join him in establishing an authoritarian state in Spain. One by one the Spanish garrisons declared for fascism and in forty-eight hours the country was immersed in a civil war. The old ruling class of landlords and industrialists were quick to join Franco. By the end of the year Italy and Germany were supplying Franco with military and technical aid on a large scale. By the following summer the Vatican openly admitted what had been obvious from the

49. Quoted in Harry W. Laidler, SEM, 561.

first, that it had "thrown its full support to Franco."⁵⁰

The Federation was vigorous in its denunciation of both the action of Franco and that of the Vatican in support of him. It saw the action of Rome as one part of a larger design to line up with autocratic forces the world around against democratic developments, in the guise of a holy crusade against Communism. In Italy the Vatican, pleased by the conclusion of the Lateran accord of February, 1929, which gave full recognition to the Pope as an independent sovereign with assurance of the full exercise of his rights and granted him supervision of religious education in the state schools, urged a vote for Mussolini and his government in the spring election of that year.⁵¹ From that date there was forthcoming no outright papal rebuke of the Italian fascist dictator, not even for the horrors of the Ethiopian campaign.⁵²

The Federation viewed the Pope's attack on Communism in 1936, which, it noted, was timed to fall between those of Hitler and Mussolini, as synonymous with the signing up of the Vatican with those leaders in the formation of an "international triumvirate" destined "to destroy democratic government and restore autocracy." The statements of each, it was observed, made it clear that their purpose was "to

50. Felix Morrow, RCR, 118.

51. Laidler, op. cit., 557.

52. SQB, January, 1937, 5.

destroy democratically-elected People's Governments, first in Spain." The Federation also speculated that another outcome of the Vatican's anti-Communist campaign would be "the settlement of the Catholic educational question in Germany as it was adjusted in Italy."⁵³

Both predictions were fulfilled. The participation of Germany, Italy, and the Vatican on the side of Franco is common knowledge. Two months after the other prediction of the Federation, Berlin announced that Catholic youth could be separately organized for religious instruction.⁵⁴

The Federation's attack of the Vatican's position in Spain was accompanied by the presentation of evidence demonstrating the fascist nature of the Pope's program. From time to time the Bulletin quoted prominent Catholic theologians who had attacked the hierarchy for its assault on the democratically-elected peoples' government in Spain. Incidents of the shooting of loyal Basque priests, who supported the Republic, by the fascists were reported. Attention was called to the widespread efforts of the Pro Deo societies to unite reactionary Protestants with Catholics in the reactionary campaign. All these developments were cited as indications of the desire of the Holy See to bring fascism to power nationally and internationally.

53. SQB, November, 1936, 1.

54. SQB, January, 1937, 5.

Aside from the potential of Vatican activities toward fascism described by the Federation, one cannot fail to recognize in the Church's official attitudes a social philosophy more favorably disposed toward a movement in the direction of a fascist state than one in the direction of the democratically-planned social order of the type envisaged by the Federation. The official attitude of the Church was expounded by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical of 1931, Quadragesimo Anno, which was developed and fully explained by Oswald Von Nell-Breuning in Reorganization of Social Economy. Edgar W. Jackson calls attention to this social encyclical in his discussion of "The Roman Catholic Church and Democracy" in the Bulletin of May, 1939. One cannot analyze that document as elaborated by Nell-Breuning without being impressed by the fact that the Pope had no argument with fascism in principle but only with one or two of its current "defects." Nowhere in the discussion is there a call for a clean break with fascist governments or parties. In fact, Nell-Breuning, after having discussed the Pope's section on the "appreciation of Fascism," had no choice but to label the fascist philosophy as "progress" in comparison to socialism.⁵⁵ At any rate, one cannot help concluding that in the event of the breakdown of capitalist economy, the Vatican would not hesitate to throw its support behind a

55. P. 256.

fascist as over against a socialist alternative. Therein was the danger foreseen by the Federation in the European situation and the reason for its intense interest in its development.

L. United Christian Council for Democracy

Just as the Federation saw the need of a more aggressive campaign of the radicals as the only answer to the increasingly aggressive campaign of the conservatives at General Conference, so it saw the need of a coalition of all religious radicals as the only answer to the coalition of reactionaries as exemplified in the "international triumvirate" of Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican. In this vein, simultaneous with the Supplement on the Spanish situation appearing in the January, 1937 Bulletin, the Federation announced its participation in the organization of the United Christian Council for Democracy, which it designated as "the first radical religious united front in this country."⁵⁶

The purpose of the new organization was "to promote Christian social action in ways that were forbidden to official bodies" because of their relation to the existing institutions of society. Organized at Columbus, Ohio, in November, 1936, the Council was to be a federation of

56. P. 1.

unofficial representatives of nine denominations who were concerned with the failure of their churches "to express the social imperatives inherent in the Christian religion." Dedicated "to labor for a radically new society," the group drew up a list of "basic principles" including the rejection of "the profit-seeking economy and the capitalistic way of life," and the establishment of a social economy under "social ownership and democratic control of the common means of life."⁵⁷ Probably the most influential contribution of the Council to the radical social movement of Christianity was to be its publication of the Six Battles for Peace in 1944, which will be considered in the next chapter. The Federation was to have a strong influence upon its policy and program.

M. War-Time Policy of the Federation

According to Federation theory, the twin of fascist developments born of the breakdown of capitalist economy was war. The acts of war of Italy in Africa, of Japan in the Far East, and of Germany in Europe during the thirties substantiated the predictions of the Federation. All three of these nations were fascist controlled and their acts of aggression were sold to their peoples as justifiable means of replacing deprivation with prosperity. Confronted with these

57. Loc. cit.

developments the Federation set itself to devise a practical policy of concerted action towards these outbreaks that at the same time would be an adequate substitute for war itself.

The policy adopted by the Executive Committee was broadly described as one of "economic non-cooperation" with aggressor nations. The term "aggressor" was defined as meaning the nation invading or otherwise attacking another nation revolting against a democratically constituted government. The aggressions of Japan, Germany, and Italy came under this definition. The concrete expression of this policy of economic non-cooperation entailed a four-point program as follows:⁵⁸

1. The Boycott of, that is the refusal to buy, Japanese, German and Italian goods.
2. An Embargo upon the shipment of arms, munitions, implements of war, secondary war materials and upon the supplying of credit facilities to the aggressor nations.
3. Selling the victims of aggressive warfare the means of defense under conditions designed in each case to remove the risk of our being drawn into war, e.g., adoptions of the cash-and-carry principle.
4. Concerted action between the popular democratic forces in the democratic nations to promote in common the policies expressed under 1, 2, and 3 and to bring about for this purpose a conference of official representatives of the nations governed under democratic constitutions.

The advocacy of these policies was always accompanied by

58. SQB, April, 1939, 4.

expressions of support for conference with the aggressor nations on ways and means to meet their economic needs on condition that their invasions would cease and that their aggressions would be abandoned.

At first glance the adoption of this program, particularly the third point, suggests that the Federation had repudiated its previous anti-war position. Its vigorous denunciations of war during the twenties -- especially its call to local churches and individuals to "excommunicate war" and to dedicate themselves "never again" to have any part in advocating war as a means of adjusting differences⁵⁹-- might well lead one to conclude that the organization had accepted the line of the absolute pacifist. Actually, however, the Federation was opposed to war only on social grounds. The slogan of the Federation during World War I had been "war must be destroyed." War had to be destroyed because it was a stumbling-block to the social application of Christianity. In Social Duties in War Time Harry F. Ward, one will recall, condemned war because it dissipated social passions, increased social needs, violated social justice, and suppressed civil liberties.⁶⁰ Similarly, the report prepared for the General Conference of 1924 (but rejected by that body) was designated to condemn war as "the most

59. See Chapter VI, 166.

60. See Chapter VI, 121.

colossal and ruinous social Sin that afflicts mankind today" and to have war excommunicated by the church and outlawed by the nation.⁶¹ It was during that period that the Federation voiced its strongest protest against war. In 1935, at the time of its affiliation with the American League Against War and Fascism, the Federation took a position on the use of violence that was seemingly more tolerant than its earlier statements on war. It was decided that violence should be "prevented" because it was "so destructive of human society and of the Christian ideal."⁶² The adoption of the policy of "economic non-cooperation" in 1939 calling, in part, for the sale of the "means of defense" to victims of aggressive warfare suggests that the Federation considered the fascism of the three aggressor nations a greater threat to social progress than the defensive war that might be required to prevent its spread.

The adoption of this policy marked, significantly, an attempt by the Federation to do in 1939 what it could not do in 1917; namely, to take a definite stand on the position required of a Christian in war-time. Divergencies of opinion within the membership during the first World War had prevented such action. Similar differences this time were to require constant re-examination of the organization's policy.

61. See Chapter VI, 160-1.

62. See Chapter VII, 214-5.

In fact, controversy within the membership finally led the Executive Committee to request a "test poll" of the membership in the April, 1939 Bulletin on the question of the advisability of its continuance. A ballot was submitted calling for a separate vote on each of the four points and requesting suggestions of alternative policies from members who disagreed with the present one. The results of the poll led the Biennial Conference of the Federation to reaffirm its approval of the economic non-cooperation policy.⁶³ The Federation felt that its program was the only possible substitute for war in dealing with aggressor nations and less likely to lead to war than any other possible course of action. Increasing differences of opinion on the war issue were to demand further reconsideration of the Federation's war-time policy, as shall be seen.

N. Some Administrative Changes of the Period

In concluding this chapter mention should be made of several changes of varying significance to the program of the Federation that occurred preceding World War II. Of chief significance was the addition to the staff of Helen G. Murray who replaced Winifred L. Chappell whose health forced her to resign altogether in the fall of 1937. The latter had worked tirelessly as an associate of Harry F. Ward for the Federation

63. SQB, September, 1939, 1.

since the tragic death of Grace Scribner in 1922. She had received wide recognition throughout the educational field for the exactness of her factual analyses of controversial social issues. Helen G. Murray had been active in the Deaconess movement for many years and had contributed to the organization of several issues of the Bulletin before joining the staff. She was to continue the tradition of selfless service to the cause of the Federation set by her two predecessors. The work of these three women is testimony to the important role played by women in the work of the Federation throughout its history.

Another change of this period was the clarification of the masthead-statement of the Bulletin on the purpose of the Federation. Since the fall of 1934 it had read simply: An organization which seeks to abolish the profit system in order to develop a classless society based upon the obligation of mutual service. Beginning with the September, 1936 issue of the Bulletin the masthead was to read: An organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

Finally, at the Cleveland Conference of January 25, 1940, the Constitution of the Federation was revised, including in part the "object," or purpose, of the organization, which was made to read: The object of the Federation

shall be to deepen within the Church the sense of social obligation and opportunity; to study, from the Christian point of view, social problems and their solution; and to promote social action in the spirit of Jesus Christ.⁶⁴ This revised statement of purpose added the phrase "and their solution" and substituted the word "action" for "service" in the final clause. The new elements symbolized in a concrete fashion the new emphasis which developed during the depression period on the necessity of social action in the economic crisis and the substitution of a planned economy as a "solution" for the recurring collapse of the capitalist system.

64. SQB, March, 1940, 4.

CHAPTER VIII

EMPHASES OF WORLD WAR II THROUGH 1948

As a result of a series of developments abroad, the tensions of war increased tremendously in this country during 1940. World War II had begun in Asia in 1931 when Japan attacked China. It had begun in Europe in September, 1939, when Germany attacked Poland. In the spring of 1940, Germany conquered Norway and Denmark and struck at France through the Netherlands and Belgium. By June, all three nations had fallen. At this point Italy joined the war on the side of Germany. England remained the only big nation fighting the Nazis. In June, 1940, the British forces were driven into the sea at Dunkirk and forced to evacuate the mainland. Germany, instead of launching an invading force across the Channel, commenced an air attack over England that unloaded unprecedented tons of bombs on British cities and factories. Meanwhile, Japan had driven the Chinese armies and government into the western part of that vast nation. When France fell, Japan, without opposition, took possession in 1940 of Indo-China. That summer brought the announcement of the Tripartite Treaty between Japan, Germany, and Italy in which the three nations declared they would stand together if one of them were attacked by a nation not already in the war. The United States took note. In September, 1940, Congress passed and the President signed the Selective Training and

Service Act, the first peace-time selective service act in the history of the country. Congress also appropriated money for the purchase of ships, planes, weapons and all the supplies needed for the expanding army and navy. With each of these developments the clouds of war hovered heavier over the nation and the citizenry became more alert to the possibility of outright participation in the devastating conflict.

In the midst of these international developments the first General Conference of a united Methodism was held in the spring of 1940 at Atlantic City, New Jersey. For the Federation the importance of the Conference was more or less over-shadowed by the impending national crisis. It noted with gratification the restatement of the Social Creed by the Conference and its addition of the provision commending social planning and democratic control of the economic processes for the common good which had been left out by the Uniting Conference which had met in 1939.¹

Another crisis of a more intimate nature absorbed the attention of the Federation at that time. The income of the organization was so far short of operating expenses that the leadership was forced to face the question whether this meant that the time when the task of carrying on the organization had become impossible for the membership. Of the 3,166 members and contributors almost half were in

1. SQB, June, 1940, 4.

arrears. Only retrenchment and the gift of a layman of another denomination had enabled the Federation to meet its financial obligations the previous year. Its predicament was part of a larger picture which revealed many voluntary philanthropic social agencies in financial difficulties. Only the conviction of the Executive Committee that its work was never more needed kept the Federation going.

In the October, 1940 issue of the Bulletin, "What Shall We Do?" the relationship of the program of the Federation to the financial problem was pondered. It was observed that what could be done financially depended upon the formulation of a program in the face of the national situation that would be sufficiently worthwhile to justify the sacrifices that the membership would have to make if the Federation were to carry on.

A. The Revised War-Time Program

To create a war-time program that would win the support of the membership in spite of the varying opinions on the war question posed a serious challenge for the Federation. The international developments of 1940 only increased the difficulty. In October of that year the Executive Committee set itself to the task. Concerning what the membership thought the nation should do in relation to the war, the leadership of the Federation surmised that there were three points of view being expressed: (1) one group wanted

the country to give all possible aid to Great Britain short of war; (2) another group wanted to extend some economic aid under definite restrictions; and (3) the final group desired that the nation keep itself free of involvement in any way in the war. In each of these groups again, it was pointed out, there were further differences, on procedure.²

As the social situation became more acute and more highly charged with emotion it became clear that any attempt to commit the Federation to any one position would decimate its membership. It was realized that since the economic-non-cooperation referendum in 1939 those who opposed that program had remained loyal to the organization only "because they felt that most of its work lay elsewhere and was deserving of their support and activity."³ It was equally clear that such a tolerant attitude was unlikely to be maintained as the situation became more intense. Consequently, it was concluded that the membership should confine itself to working on those urgent tasks on which there was united opinion; attitudes of the members on issues relating to the war were to be expressed through organizations specifically set up for that purpose. This policy left the member free to say or do whatever he desired without in any way committing or representing the Federation. Thus the

2. SQB, October, 1940, 2.

3. Loc. cit.

organization faced the new war as it had the last, without any official opinion on it. It neither supported nor opposed it.

Once again, too, the Federation posed as "the central issue" of the crisis the question whether the democratic process could be maintained and stated its conviction that unless the "hard-won democracy" could be preserved the kind of social order it desired would be impossible to obtain. On this basis a twofold program to defend both democratic rights and living standards was drawn up. The first half of the program included the right of minority political groups to express themselves, the right of conscientious objectors to exemption from service under military authorities, and the rights of labor as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, the National Labor Relations Act, the Wages and Hours Act, and the Walsh-Healey Act. The other half of the program on which all were asked to unite was the defense of living standards -- the health and housing of the people against the exactions of profiteers, operating under the cloak of a program of national defense. Supplementing this program was a commitment to continue to support such specific measures as the Anti-lynching Bill, abolition of the poll tax, aid for war refugees, discontinuance of trade with Japan, a program of China relief, opposition to anti-Semitism, and opposition to all forms of race discrimination. For preachers of the gospel a further duty was added; namely,

the bringing to light and judgment the underlying causes of war in order that history might not again be permitted to repeat itself. The presentation of this program was accompanied by the disclosure of incidents which demonstrated that these basic rights had already been violated.⁴

During the ensuing year the Bulletin was largely devoted, issue by issue, to a consideration of the effect of the national defense program upon the twofold program of the Federation. The overall defense program itself was analyzed with regard to its validity, efficiency, and sincerity. The barrage of criticism it received was as merciless as that leveled at the New Deal program. Skepticism was raised as to the intended use of the vast number of boys going to camp in view of the President's statement that none of the boys would be used in a foreign war. "The record of history, reinforced by our unemployment situation," it was submitted, made it clear that the boys being trained would not be demobilized without being used somewhere. The undemocratic nature of the defense program which was imposed upon the people without any opportunity for them to choose its objectives or general policies was criticized. Highly-profitable deals by Americans of business with German and Japanese industrialists were cited as evidence that while business was against Hitler it was not against Hitlerism.

4. Ibid., 2-3.

All in all, the entire situation was seen as a natural outgrowth of the profit-seeking economy. War production provided the new market that profits demanded. "The capitalist economy now depends upon the production of the means of death to keep itself going."⁵ Other issues treated the dangers which the defense program entailed for labor standards, civil liberties, health, and housing.

In the meantime, another incident occurred abroad that led the Federation to reconsider its policy toward the war. Germany attacked Russia, which threw the first socialist state into the orbit of the capitalist democracies. The Bulletin of October, 1941, saw little reason for encouragement in this development. In fact, in terms of its program for defense of democratic rights and living standards, the Federation anticipated more undemocratic measures at home to assure big business that the nation was not actually in alliance with Communism. The close of the war would bring a break between the western allies and Russia and the development of the old antagonisms between capitalist and socialist society. Even "the isolationist reaction" of this nation, it was prophesied, would become interventionist in its determination that no anti-capitalist government would be set up anywhere in Europe. The end-result of this pattern,

5. SQB, November, 1940, 3. For material of previous discussion, 1-3.

unless the western world would insist upon the extension of democracy to the economic order, would be "continuous war, revolution, economic insecurity, and want."⁶

After a year of hammering away at the national defense program in the light of its own twofold program, by Harry F. Ward in the Bulletin and by Charles Webber in the field before church, college, and labor groups, beside some twenty-eight Annual Conferences, the Executive Committee of the Federation re-examined its war-time policy. Citing the widespread approval with which the program had been viewed by other social-action groups as well as the Federation membership, the Committee unanimously agreed to continue it for another year. Primary emphasis for the coming year, 1941-42, however, was to be placed on the Statement of Purpose adopted in 1936 following the General Conference which called for the rejection of the method of struggle for profit as the economic base of society, the substitution for it of the method of social-economic planning under democratic control with social ownership, and the seeking of the transition implied through education and democratic discussion as over against violence.⁷ As it developed, in fact, this program for social change and the twofold war program continued to represent Federation policy throughout the war-period.

6. P. 3.

7. See SQB, November, 1941, 4.

B. The Union-Organizing Work of Webber in Virginia

Supplementing these programs was the organizing work of Charles Webber in Virginia for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of the C.I.O. -- a responsibility which was assumed as a project to help finance the Federation program. This dual role of Webber was made possible only through the sacrificial service of his wife who gave her full time on a volunteer basis to the Federation office in his absence. Monthly reports of his activities in Virginia were carried in the Bulletin. Needless to say, a union organizer in the South led a tempestuous life.

The June, 1943 issue of the Bulletin featured an article by the editor, "American Fascism -- A Case Study," in which Webber modestly related his experiences around Martinsville, Virginia. It is a story of tolerance and serenity in the face of terroristic tactics against his life, denial of civil liberties by all the churches, including the Methodist, and slanderous and fallacious attacks over the radio and from the pulpit by a fundamentalist preacher who was promised a contribution to his work by the Police Commissioner in return for his services. That Webber was saved from the violence experienced by previous organizers in the area was in large measure due to his calling in the F.B.I. This, as he pointed out, exercised a deterring effect upon the terroristic ambitions of members of the

opposition who remained loyal to the Jobbers Pants Company. An added detriment to the cause was the attempt of the bishop of the area, a district superintendent, and a prominent layman of the church to discourage Webber to give up the task out of fear that he would "hurt the reputation of the Methodist Church" if he continued.⁸

In spite of repeated threats by the Ku Klux Klan, and his inability to secure an auditorium, a hall, a hotel room, or even a room in a church or public school in which the workers could publicly assemble and peacefully petition the Congress of the United States for a redress of grievances, Webber was successful in obtaining his objective. His petition in behalf of Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union to secure an election in two of the four plants of the Jobbers Pants Company was unanimously supported by the National Labor Relations Board. On December 13, 1943, the employees voted to be represented by the union and thereby answered the intimidation, misrepresentation, and other types of antagonistic pressure employed in the crisis.⁹ Webber came away from this experience convinced that in the eyes of the populace and of the church in Virginia, because he was a representative of organized labor, he was an "enemy" of his country.¹⁰

8. P. 2.

9. SQB, January, 1944, 4.

10. SQB, May, 1943, 4.

C. "Six Battles For Peace"

In 1944 the Federation issued the series of leaflets in cooperation with the United Christian Council for Democracy known as the Six Battles for Peace. They appeared singly in six consecutive issues of the Bulletin beginning with the issue of January, 1944. The project was one of the final and most significant contributions of Harry F. Ward to the Federation inasmuch as, in the fall of 1943, he had of necessity to limit his services to the Federation to the preparation of the first three pages of the Bulletin. The leaflets were distributed through the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Baptist, and Evangelical and Reformed Churches, as well as the Methodist, and were reprinted widely in the labor and cooperative press. The scope of their influence was the result of the affiliation of the Federation with the United Christian Council for Democracy, the unofficial church fellowship devoted to radical social education and action, which at this time was cooperating with the Methodist Federation, the Evangelical and Reformed Council for Social Reconstruction, the Presbyterian Fellowship for Social Action, the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice, the Church League for Industrial Democracy (Episcopal), and the Rauschenbusch Fellowship of Baptists. The six leaflets were designed to provide a fundamental analysis of each of six major issues facing the nation, the subject

matter of which was suggested by their titles: "Stop Inflation," "Secure Full Employment," "Defeat Free Enterprise Propaganda," "Destroy Cartels," "Eliminate Discrimination," and "Extend Democracy."

In contrast to the Crisis Leaflets, the Six Battles for Peace presented a more intensive study of each of the issues raised and concluded each study with a section on "Recommendations for Action." Courses of action on current legislation before Congress were suggested and creative programs to combat inflation, post-war unemployment, discrimination, cartels and free enterprise propaganda were listed.

Conveniently, the sixth leaflet, "Extend Democracy," more or less summarized the substance of the argument of the complete series. Essentially, "the battles for peace" were part of "a general engagement between the forces of progress and the forces of reaction over the future of democracy." Inflation could not be stopped, full employment could not be secured, cartels could not be destroyed, discrimination could not be eliminated unless "democratic controls" could be extended to the whole of the national economy. Only through this process could the full capacities of the nation be developed for the benefit of all the people. The extension of democracy was defined as "the increase of the people's power to control together every part of their common life." For its fulfillment two immediate points of

action were apparent: the reconversion of the economy from war to peacetime needs and the international arrangements upon which the national security and progress would depend. The decision to be made was whether these matters were to be administered "by and for Big Business, or by and for the people through planning and administrative commissions" composed of representatives of all groups participating in the economic process. Having indicated in each issue the democratic and anti-democratic elements contending for control of the post-war world, the total study was pointed up to this question: "On which side are you?" Was the reader for price control or inflation, full employment or unemployment and bankruptcies, people's planning and action or "free enterprise," democratic international economic agreements or cartels, equal rights and opportunities for all or discrimination, extension of democracy or fascism? Unless the extension of democracy on a worldwide scale were then begun, it was predicted, the formal terms of peace would "once more be only the dragon's teeth from which future armies will arise."¹¹

D. "Honor To Whom Honor Is Due"

Simultaneous with the first issue of the Six Battles for Peace in the January, 1944 issue of the Bulletin came

11. SQB, June, 1944, 1-3.

the announcement that at a meeting of the Executive Committee on October 18, 1943, Francis J. McConnell, President, and Harry F. Ward, Secretary, had presented their resignations to take effect at the close of the General Conference in May, 1944. The resignations were accepted with expressions of sincere and deep regret. Harry F. Ward was one of the five founders of the Federation in 1907 and had been its chief navigator for the intervening period. Since October, 1919, he had served as secretary without remuneration. Francis J. McConnell had been at the helm ever since he was elected to the episcopacy in 1912. As the Bulletin was quick to point out, so many years of continuous service in the leadership of a church organization in the field of social thought and action was "a record without parallel in American Protestantism."¹² Similarly, another statement read, "If there is a social action movement in American Protestantism, it is to a large extent the lengthened shadow of these two men."¹³

These two men formed an inseparable combination. Both were men of deep insight and broad vision. The Federation had provided a platform within the church from which they were both able to prophesy. Within the organization their roles were comparable to one another. Functionally speaking, one might say that Ward was the radical and McConnell the

12. P. 4.

13. Alson J. Smith, ASF, 6.

liberal, if these two terms are defined as the latter defined them on the occasion of his twenty-fifth anniversary address as a member of the episcopacy delivered at Carnegie Hall:¹⁴

The radical usually is fighting for a chance to express his own views. The liberal fights to give anybody, even his opponent, a chance for free utterance.

As representatives of the Federation, it can be said without undue generalization, that Ward carried the message and McConnell, with the influence of his prestige and episcopal office, cleared the way of opposition that it would be sure to be heard. The secretary was the quarterback; the president his running guard. The latter has fondly quoted the remark of George A. Coe in his behalf to the effect that he was never a propagandist for anything but free speech.¹⁵ In another place McConnell indirectly describes his role as president of the Federation in relation to the radical position of the agency as exemplified by the secretary. Speaking of the role of the prophet in the church, he said in Christianity and Social Adventuring:¹⁶

Nevertheless, it is imperative that we have prophets, and those who themselves cannot prophesy ought to exert themselves to the utmost to make a place for the prophet -- to stand by and give him his chance...

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14. "Twenty-five Years of Religious and Social Change," October 25, 1937. Printed and distributed by the Federation.
 15. Quoted in interview with author, November 15, 1948.
 16. Jerome Davis, editor, Chapter III, "The Church and Social Questions," 55.

Well could he have been envisaging the "basic task" of the Federation when he added a bit later, "Only the proposal radically to tear down and rebuild some social institutions can stir most of us out of our inertness."¹⁷ In this period McConnell and Ward had worked side by side in selfless service in the work of the Federation. Voluntarily they gave of their services and of their substance, on many occasions underwriting the budget of the organization with their own funds that its work might continue.

The resignation of McConnell and Ward was followed shortly by that of Executive and Field Secretary Webber on December 1, 1943. Webber had assumed his office in July, 1936, and had given to it efficient and prophetic leadership in the face of much antagonism in those trying years of the depression. In appreciation of his sacrificial service to the Federation, McConnell said in part:¹⁸

At many a crisis he (Webber) has had to face personal dangers of which only his intimate acquaintances have known. The Federation can never adequately discharge the debt of obligation due him for his wonderfully creative service during all these years.

Undoubtedly, Webber's intense interest in and thorough knowledge of the labor movement was influential in bringing him to his decision. Immediately following his resignation,

17. Ibid., 56.

18. SQB, February, 1944, 4.

he accepted a full-time position with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America as a National Representative, a position affording opportunity to serve the labor movement in organizing unions, developing workers' education, and promoting public relations and political action. Mrs. Webber selflessly continued her service in the Federation office until the close of General Conference the following spring.

E. Reorganization of the Federation

The immediate question, of course, projected by the retirement of its staff was what was to be the future of the organization. In pursuit of an answer to this question an Ad Interim Administrative Committee composed of Wade Crawford Barclay, Chairman, Ralph B. Urmy, and Lester W. Auman was appointed by the Executive Committee.

The loss of the leadership of McConnell, Ward and Webber, the men who had been largely responsible for the formulation of Federation policy and program, raised the question of the wisdom of continuing the organization. Had the Federation served its purpose? Did the periodic financial struggles and consequent sacrifices of a few of its members warrant the maintenance of the organization? If continued, should it persist as an unofficial agency or seek to gain recognition as an official Commission on Social Action of the church? These were the questions with

which the new Committee concerned itself. In the early part of 1944 a questionnaire along this line was sent to two thousand active members for suggestions as to the future of the organization.

A statistical summary of the responses was carried in the April Bulletin. The findings disclosed that a majority of the members emphatically favored continuance of the Federation substantially in its present form. A significant number desired that the organization continue if only a minimum part-time service were possible. Many, while recognizing that an official status would assure the Federation of adequate financial support, were convinced that such a change would entail a loss of freedom and consequently its frontier position in the field of social thought. A minority favored the continuance of the Federation but believed that there should be an official social-action organization in the church also. Some felt that a broader and more concrete program of social action projects for the local church was needed. Others suggested that the old name had been outgrown and should be changed. Almost all agreed that the Federation was more needed and indispensable than ever before. On the basis of the results of this questionnaire the Ad Interim Administrative Committee recommended that the future of the Federation and a plan of continuation be decided upon at the Annual Meeting of the membership to be held at the

seat of the General Conference in May at Kansas City.¹⁹

The 'June Bulletin reported the action voted by the members of the Federation at the Annual Meeting. Unanimous agreement with the action of the Executive Committee in recommending continuance of the organization was voted. While the discussion of the body emphasized the need for an official social-action commission, or board department, supported by World Service funds, it also stressed agreement with the conviction of the Executive Committee in its insistence on the maintenance of an unofficial, independent organization.²⁰

A thorough analysis of the replies to a Referendum on the future of the Federation placed before the membership following the questionnaire admirably supplemented the decision of the Annual Meeting and suggested the line of argument that must have precipitated the eventual vote. It was prepared by Franklin H. Littell, a member of the new Executive Committee elected at the Annual Meeting. Littell's analysis recorded that there appeared to be agreement among Federation members that "Methodist social action needs to move along two fronts." One, a "Commission on Social Action" which would be authorized by the General Conference to "prepare general materials and provide a broad educational program of

19. P. 7-8.

20. SQB, June, 1944, 5.

social education now lacking." This "comprehensive organization" would represent the church in the Federal Council and would supply systematically articles to the denominational press and study materials for curriculum use. The other "front" would be that of "an unofficial voluntary independent organization for more radical analysis and action" than would be possible by an official organization. This was the "advance guard" role assigned to the Federation for the immediate future which was "to prepare the way" for an official organization and "later to prevent the official organization from merely marking time or from falling asleep." The Federation would also be the proper agency to cooperate with labor, farm, and cooperative organizations since it could do so "in a way not feasible to an official agency." Littell criticized as naive the opinions of the few who proposed the official organization as an "alternative" to the Federation for several reasons. First, because of the fragmentation of the liberal forces of the church as a result of attitudes toward the war, it would likely "take at least two quadrenniums" to organize a block powerful enough to push the measure through General Conference. (The close margin by which such a measure was defeated at the 1948 session would seem to attest to the accuracy of that prediction.) The fundamental criticism leveled at the minority-opinion in favor of an official organization and the discontinuance of the Federation, however, was that, due

to "the lines of economic interest" crossing the church, the consequence of such an eventuality would be a "safe" program that "would leave the liberals and radicals of Methodism to disgraceful and futile isolation."²¹

Littell closed his analysis of the Referendum replies of the membership with a statement on the nature of the plan of operation for the Federation for the immediate future. Consequent developments within the organization would seem to indicate that his reflection was recognized as wise counsel. The strength of the Federation was seen to lie in small social-action groups that had developed in the various Annual Conferences. Consequently, it seemed wise to emphasize more strongly the formation of social-action "cells" in the local churches where "lay, youth, and rural interests will find natural expression." Also, as other members had suggested, the new executive secretary to be selected should be "possibly a young man not now widely known who would grow into the program," and yet a man "with sound academic equipment and some organizational experience."²² These observations were to be heeded in the implementation of the present Federation program.

During the interim period in which the Federation was being reorganized the special committee headed by Wade

21. SQB, June, 1944, 4.

22. Ibid., 5.

Crawford Barclay kept the office intact and continued to issue the Bulletin.²³ The sincerity and genuineness of the appeals for personal opinions on the nature of the future of the organization is attested to by the generous allotment of space that continued to be given to a consideration of this question in the periodical during the fall months. The October and November issues both carried a series of brief articles by prominent churchmen and women stating their ideas of what the Federation should be. In the main, the various expressions of opinion collaborated the analysis of Littell. Armed with this information the Executive Committee proceeded to look for an executive secretary who would bring these desires to fruition.

F. Appointment of the New Executive Secretary

By unanimous action on December 2, 1944, the Executive Committee elected Jack R. McMichael as executive secretary of the Federation. At the time the new leader -- still under thirty -- was chaplain at the United States Maritime Service

23. Under Barclay's leadership the Ad Interim Committee, which served from December, 1943, to December, 1944, made several significant contributions to the program. Chief among these was the enlargement of the Bulletin with an attractive new format, the reorganization of the Federation's files, and the financial undergirding achieved through the promotional campaign which netted \$7,421, one of the largest sums ever accumulated by the agency.

Officers School at Alameda, California, where he had served for two years. Educationally the new secretary was thoroughly qualified. A graduate of Emory University, Union Theological Seminary, and the Pacific School of Religion, he had served during the academic year 1940-41 as assistant in the Department of Christian Ethics of Union Seminary.

Though young, McMichael had had a remarkably broad experience in religious and social work. For two years he was chairman of the National Council of the Student Christian Association,²⁴ also having served as chairman of the Southern Field Council of the Y.M.C.A. Those positions involved vigorous action in Christian social relations, especially in the field of race. Later he was sent to China by the National Student Movement as an ambassador of good will in response to an invitation from China's Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. The year 1938 was spent in working with students and other groups in both occupied and unoccupied China. He attended the Madras Conference as student delegate from the United States. He also participated in the Travancore Conference of the World Student Christian Federation. To have special significance for the future Federation program were the contacts and activities of McMichael in rural church work. During the summer of 1940 he had served under the Board of National Missions of

24. The National Council of the S.C.A. has also been known as The National Student Y.M.C.A. As its chairman McMichael also became co-chairman of The National Intercollegiate Christian Council.

the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. in a special assignment for work in sharecropper areas of Arkansas. The summer following he had served under the Home Mission Council with special emphasis on sharecropper leadership training institutes. On this job, he worked also with trade union groups, organizing one institute on an interracial basis. McMichael's southern background was to mean a new impetus for the new program of the Federation in the fields of race relations and rural work.²⁵

At the same meeting of the Executive Committee other new officers were selected. Lewis O. Hartman was elected president; James C. Baker and G. Bromley Oxnam, vice presidents; Thelma Stevens, recording secretary; and Gilbert Q. LeSourd, treasurer.

G. The First "Imperative Need"

The first experience of McMichael as executive secretary was a cross-country trip from west to east which enabled him to get a close look at Federation activities on the local level. Growing out of this experience was the conviction of "The Imperative Need of Federation Organization." Under this title in the March, 1945 Bulletin the new secretary stated the case for the need of organizing the Federation as "a channel for the expression of" social ideals. It was his

25. See. SQB, December, 1944, 1 for background.

impression that the Federation at the time was more or less "a fellowship of like-minded and similarly-dedicated individuals" who were "isolated from one another" and held together largely by the "vision" of "the Social Questions Bulletin and other informational and inspirational material from the National Office." The Federation, McMichael affirmed, must continue to supply this vision and fellowship; but it was also essential, as suggested by members throughout the nation, that the organization serve as "a vehicle for effective carrying out of that vision and information into the organized life of the Church and of society." The Federation was to give new emphasis to bridging "the tragic gulf" which existed between the social convictions of social-minded Christians and the actual translation of such attitudes into "the kind of effective social action that really changes the course of history."²⁶

To realize this end the organization of Conference and local chapters of the Federation "to mould and implement total Federation policy and program" was suggested. The aim was to stimulate social action on the grass-roots' level. It was hoped that these units would be set up "wholly on functional lines, disregarding the superficial and fundamentally unbrotherly bases of division" that still prevailed in the Jurisdictional and Annual Conferences, and in local

26. P. 4.

churches. The stress throughout was placed on function. The local church chapters were to meet regularly and not too infrequently and these meetings were to be occasions "not only for fellowship and inspiration, but for democratic discussion and decision on burning social issues and for concrete and united action."²⁷

This organizational plan for Federation chapters was approved the following month by the Executive Committee at its March meeting and reported in the April Bulletin. Flyers were also distributed to the membership explaining the plan. Whereas previously Federation units had been organized strictly along Conference lines, Conference Chapters were now to be reorganized on "a geographical area basis" to make possible "functional participation" in a Chapter of all members of the Federation residing in a particular area, irrespective of Conference membership. This plan thereby cut across Jurisdictional lines and enabled all members of a given locality, Negro and white, to unite for social action on a given issue with increased effectiveness.²⁸

Besides making the Federation far more potent as an agency of social education and action, the plan approved created new rights for Chapters which were intended to make

27. Loc. cit.

28. P. 6.

the organization more democratic. By adhering to certain requisite standards a Conference Territory Chapter was granted the privilege of electing one member to the Executive Committee and as many as five members to the National Committee of the Federation. Also stipulated was the right to an annual return from membership dues for Chapter-organizations, designed, of course, to stimulate the creation of new units. Local Chapters were encouraged where there were enough Federation members living in smaller geographical areas. Such groups, of twenty-five regular members or more, were permitted to elect two members to the National Committee. To tie both types of Chapters into the national organization each Chapter was required to designate a regular correspondent whose responsibility it was to communicate regularly with the national office giving not only information concerning social problems faced and attacked but also constructive criticism and suggestions for the national program. To ensure the maintenance of functioning Chapters, each was required to hold at least two meetings annually at which some concrete social action must be taken. The stress that has been placed on action at the grass-roots by the new administration cannot be over-emphasized. Throughout, the promotion of this plan, which remains intact today, has been undergirded by the conviction, reaffirmed in a statement of progress on the plan a year later, that only as the members "become active participants in a functioning local or Annual

Conference chapter" will "the deep and life-giving brotherhood of the Federation" become real.²⁹ To organize the socially-concerned for action in concrete situations has been the motivating force behind the new plan of local and Conference groups of the Federation.

H. A Proposed Program of Study and Action

One of the first obligations of the Federation upon reorganization was the formulation of a social-action program that would gain the support of the socially minded in the church. Accordingly, at the July meeting in 1945 of the Executive Committee a comprehensive program was drawn up. It appeared in the October Bulletin as "A Proposed Program of Study and Action."³⁰ In a revised form this statement remains today the basis of the Federation program.

The outlined program was introduced by a statement of the overall goal of the Federation which is an enlargement of the familiar masthead statement of the Bulletin. The program itself consists of eight divisions which, in turn, are subdivided into two parts: general objectives and a list of suggested actions to be taken on immediate issues before the public. The general objectives are as follows: (1) To extend, strengthen, and cooperate with the democratic trade

29. SQB, February, 1946, 20.

30. P. 78.

union movement and the rural and urban cooperative movement; (2) To establish and extend full ethnic democracy; (3) To extend and universalize democratic suffrage (of which fascism makes a mockery); (4) To establish, preserve, and undergird civil liberties and minority rights; (5) To contest all political, economic, and military imperialism; (6) To seek full, socially useful employment in the days, and for the needs, of peace; (7) To combat the evils of monopoly capitalism by seeking national and international curbs on monopolies and cartels; and (8) To promote an American foreign policy aimed at lasting peace and progressive change in the world through the extension of peoples' power. Where directly applicable, the contrast of these broad objectives to fascism was sharply drawn.

A list of the social incidents called out for specific action since the adoption of the Proposed Program would fill several pages in itself. Most of them at one time or another were treated in some detail in an issue of the Bulletin. The latter enlarged from four to eight pages beginning in June, 1944, and finally to sixteen pages as of the issue of June-August, 1945. A few of the items which have received attention include opposition to the Barton-Ball-Hutch Bill, repeal of the Smith-Connolly Anti-Labor Act, return to the principles of the Wagner Act, repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, exposé of the campaign of the National

Tax Equality Association against the cooperatives, support of a federal F.E.P.C., abolition of white primaries and discriminatory practices, enfranchisement of the American Indians and citizens of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska, abolition of Oriental exclusion laws, financial support within Methodism for Methodist conscientious objectors, support of Georgia's reduction of voting age to eighteen, abolishment of the Thomas-Rankin Committee, support of federal anti-lynching legislation, promotion of political and economic independence for India, Indonesia, and all colonial peoples, support of United Nations trusteeship over the mandated Japanese islands, opposition to "across the board" reduction in income taxes, opposition to universal peacetime military conscription, support of Bretton Woods monetary agreements, support of more T.V.A.'s, support of a vast public housing program, expansion of Social Security benefits, support of O.P.A. and price control, support of a progressive tax program, support of friendly relations with the Soviet Union, opposition to diplomatic representation with the Vatican, eradication of stockpiles of atom bombs and opposition to continuance of their manufacture.

This extensive program is distributed by the Federation in leaflet-form. The closing paragraph deserves to be quoted in full:

Through this concrete immediate program, the Methodist Federation for Social Action works to make peace secure and, ultimately, to attain a society in which the people themselves cooperatively and democratically plan and provide the production and distribution of goods and services with the motive and to the end, not of profits for the few, but of service for all; and in which frustrating and unbrotherly barriers of inequality, whether grounded on class distinction or on race or national or sex discrimination, have been ended, supplanted by brotherhood, full and unreserved, and by equal opportunity for maximum personal development.

I. Broadening of the Scope of Interests

One is promptly impressed by the wide sweep of the present program of the Federation, especially when compared with the earlier program. Several of the major aspects of the present program had long since been entrusted to other agencies in the church by the earlier administration. Partly responsible, of course, was the volunteer service of the leadership and the meager budget under which the agency had to operate. The former administration was forced to narrow its activities. Following its near-financial collapse in the early part of the depression, the Federation decided to mobilize all of its remaining resources in attacking what it considered to be the source of its difficulty and that of the world; namely, "a dying capitalism."³¹ From

31. See Chapter VII, 199 ff.

that day forward the former program of the Federation was devoted with few exceptions to an all-out attack on capitalism to the exclusion of other issues.

The most obvious departures of the present program are the new emphasis on social education and action in the South, ethnic democracy, and the rural problem. The interrelation of these issues is apparent. As intimated earlier, the personal background and resources of the present executive secretary are largely responsible for these recent developments. One of his contributions to the Bulletin was "The New Social Climate in the South," which appeared in the spring following his appointment. It was an account of an extensive trip through the South from which McMichael had recently returned. During this trip he visited six colleges, Negro and white, and made significant contacts with prominent socially-minded Southern leaders on behalf of the Federation. The secretary was impressed by the fundamental thinking about the basic social, economic, and political changes essential for a durable peace that was being done by the young people in the South. He observed that conditions were "ripe" and the climate "favorable for significant social advance in the South" and that there was new opportunity today "for constructive advance in brotherly cooperation between the races."³²

Many students, more interested in acting than talking

32. May, 1945, 4.

about changing conditions, eagerly joined the Federation when they learned that it was a means for effective social action as well as education. Among the "key" social leaders in the South who were won to the Federation during this trip were A. S. Turnipseed of the Alabama Conference, Claude C. Fullerton, a member of the South Georgia Conference and a well-known resource-leader on the rural problem, William T. Watkins, a member of the episcopacy since 1938 and a leader of progressive social Christianity in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, and Mrs. M. E. Tilly, able and fearless Jurisdictional Secretary of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities of the Woman's Society of Christian Service and a member of President Truman's Committee on Education. The last two named were shortly elected to membership on the Executive Committee of the Federation. The association of these and other prominent social leaders in the South with the Federation opened new avenues for expansion of its program into the racial and rural problems within and without the church. The consequence of this trip for the Federation was projected in the secretary's statement:³³

The progressive democratic forces in the South are on the march. The climate is ripe for aggressive social advance... We can look to this region not only for many individual Federation members, but for solid and effective Federation chapters which will give real and significant leadership to our total

33. Ibid., 15.

program. We also need more material in the Bulletin on the Kingdom victories being won in the South, and we can get the material through these new members and new chapters.

Thus, that which the original organization was unable to do because of a divided Methodism, the new administration set out to accomplish.

Illustrative of the activities of the new Federation members in the South is the report of a commission of five created by the Alabama Conference Chapter of the Federation to investigate and study the proposition "of making Methodism more representative of the common man in agriculture and industry" and "to propose a plan of economic brotherhood for the Methodist itinerancy itself" which would make possible such a ministry to the common man. The report is incorporated in a volume entitled Making Methodism Methodist, a compilation of articles originally published in The Pastor between December, 1946, and June, 1947. Members of the commission included C. C. Garner, J. F. McLeod, Jr., J. B. Nichols, A. S. Turnipseed, and J. A. Zellner. The volume presents a scorching indictment of the unrepresentative nature of the episcopal system of church government in the Methodist Church. Statistics were presented to demonstrate that as much as ninety-six per cent of the delegates to the governing body of the church, the General Conference, are from large urban churches, even though seventy-three per cent of Methodist churches are rural. Using the delegation

to the General Conference of 1944 as typical the study disclosed that only 1.2 per cent of the clerical delegates served rural churches and that there was not a single delegate from a small industrial or "mill" church. In this regard, the report concluded that since the little church is assessed its proportionate amount of conference expenditures, justice demands that it be given its proper share of "home grown" representatives in the general councils and governing bodies of the church and that it be given free and equal access to all ministerial talent available. Similarly, the inadequacy of church literature and program materials for the small church was demonstrated and criticized. Positively, in the interest of representative policy, the report recommended a plan of ministerial support copied after the plan used for missionaries by the Board of Missions and Church Extension. Such a plan, it was held, would do away with the ill-balanced salary scale now existing and would make the itinerant system more flexible, which in turn would allow a better adjustment of ministerial talent to church needs. The report was presented to give voice to the fear that modern Methodism was not living up to the "representative philosophy" the itinerant system was historically established to preserve. Hope was expressed that the church will become alarmed over this development and set about to make "Methodism more Methodist" in the matter of representation and the other closely

related problems dealt with.³⁴

The intense interest in the rural problem is a distinctive characteristic of the present program. In the main, prior to 1944 the problems of the farmer for many years had received consideration by the Federation only insofar as they were related to the larger issue of the economic order. In this regard issues of the Bulletin during the thirties discussed the effect of the depression and the New Deal upon the farmer on several occasions. Of course, as was indicated, during the early period of the Federation, community service projects for rural America were considered along with projects for other types of American communities. But on the whole, the Federation program was urban-centered and dealt for the most part with problems of the industrial order. In the fall of 1944 a new emphasis on the problems of rural life, cultural and economic, began to develop within the Federation.

An editorial in the Bulletin by Wade Crawford Barclay, Ad Interim editor until the appointment of Alson J. Smith in November, 1946, presented the challenge of the rural problem to the Methodist Church and the Federation in particular. He said:³⁵

The constituent factors of the American rural problem are largely social in character. Because of this its challenge is one that

34. See Chapter VII, "Shall We Have Prophets or Profits?" for presentation of the plan of ministerial support, 81ff.

35. November, 1944, 7.

makes urgent demands upon the Methodist Federation for Social Service. The Federation is thereby called upon to render a distinctive service to the rural membership and constituency of Methodism -- a service that cannot be thought of other than as one of its two or three most important functions. Its social objectives in terms of this rural constituency should be clearly defined and should be such as in content and method represent an advance beyond the program of the official agencies of the Church.

Thereupon four social objectives were suggested as guides for the program of the Federation in the rural field. One, emphasis upon "life on the land" as primarily "a way of life," in contrast to commercial pursuits as means of financial profit; two, aid to rural Methodism which would help it to develop within itself a "sense of community," a realization that a church's mission is to serve the community; three, stimulation of "the growth of cooperation" as a religious duty; and four, agitation for "aid in maintaining the family-sized farm" such as that being given by the Roman Catholic Church and by the Mennonites.³⁶

The current "Proposed Program" of the Federation indicates that the organization has accepted these social objectives in dealing with the rural program. It encourages a thorough study of cooperative ownership of farm machinery, demands the cur^bing of the expansion of large-scale and corporation farm systems, urges Washington to give full support

36. Ibid., 7-8.

to the original program of the International Food and Agriculture Organization, and supports low-interest government loans to family-type farmers and the expansion of rural electrification, telephone, road buildings, and also welfare and cultural programs that the good things of life might be enjoyed by all alike. Moreover, since the beginning of 1946 the Bulletin has carried with regularity a column by Roger Ortmayer of Mount Union College entitled "Rural Social Action" in which federal legislation and other items bearing on the rural problem are discussed at length.

J. National Meeting at Kansas City in 1947

One would become involved in endless discussion were he to attempt to cover the wide range of emphases of the present Federation program as it has developed since 1945. Its sweep has been broad and thorough. A fair perspective of the relative attention given to the multitudinous social developments at home and abroad can be gained by observing the various special commissions set up at the National Meeting at Kansas City in December, 1947. The adoption of the commission process at the last few National Meetings of itself is suggestive of the comprehensiveness of the present program. Commissions presented reports on the relation of the Christian Church to agriculture, colonialism and the Far East, Europe, labor, civil liberties, human relations in the community, and to American-Soviet relations. By and large, general Federation

policy on most of these issues has been considered previously. No marked difference in Federation policy between the old and new administrations is in evidence in these instances. Two of these issues, however, both because of the national repercussion caused by the press reports of their discussion at the National Meeting and their pertinence for current international developments, warrant special consideration here; namely, the statements on China and on American-Soviet relations.

The statement on China contained in the Resolutions on the Christian Church and Colonialism and the Far East called upon the Division of Foreign Missions of the church to urge the formulation of a policy and program "in the light of new developments" which would be "dissociated from the American government policy in China" and to make available its report to the State Department. It was recommended that at the earliest possible time a number of missionaries be dispatched to work in North China and Manchuria. The report further urged an immediate withdrawal of American military advisory groups from China and an embargo upon munitions or other military aid to China; approved a long-range reconstruction program but only after China has achieved a unified coalition government representative of all political groups; and asked that the United States government request the United Nations Security Assembly to end all unilateral action in China and that it contribute food to China on the

basis of need and under United Nations auspices. The report further recommended that the Federation submit a memorial on China to the forthcoming General Conference.³⁷

McMichael in his Annual Report, a comprehensive analysis of the social scene and current tensions in the light of the Christmas story, told the delegates that American foreign policy made possible "the reactionary civil war" in China because it backed the "wealthy and privileged who have traditionally and cruelly oppressed the common people" and were now violently defending "the untenable status quo against needed and necessary change." He added that Moscow was not responsible for the fundamental struggle involved in the civil war and that it would have transpired "either with or without a Moscow."³⁸

Present at the National Meeting was the late Feng Yu-hsiang, otherwise known as "the Christian general," who spoke through an interpreter. A former leader in Chiang's party, he is reported to have denounced the Methodist Chinese leader as a dictator who assigned to concentration camps anybody who used the word "democracy" or "peace." Such were labeled Communists. He supported the Communist side in the civil war as the real army of the people, the peasants.³⁹

37. SQB, February-March, 1948, 42.

38. Ibid., 23.

39. Reported by Frederick Woltman in New York World-Telegram, December 29, 1947, 12. Yu-hsiang was lost recently when the ship on which he was returning to North China caught fire and was destroyed in the Mediterranean Sea.

The declaration on American-Soviet relations was much more comprehensive than its title indicates. It virtually covered all of the important phases of the present critical international situation. Selfish and unapologetic nationalism which ultimately rests back on "appeal to naked force" was condemned as unChristian and non-violence and goodwill were advocated as the Christian way of action. Opposition was voiced to compulsory universal military training as a program that constituted "a reversal of American public policy and a negation of the basic principles of our democracy." The menace of the "growing militarization of our national life" received attention and its dangers for all civil functions were also cited. On American-Soviet relations proper, the report declared:

...We lift our voice in urgent appeal to the leaders of our government to surrender the methods of war, whether 'hot' or 'cold', and to seek a solution of our relationships with the government of Russia through understanding, goodwill, the mutual respect for the legitimate rights and interests of each of our great peoples and cooperation through the structure and processes of the United Nations.

In the interest of preventing a third global war a constructive program of inseparable elements leading to national and international security and enduring peace was suggested to the government. It proposed: (1) that foreign policy should be predicated upon the assumption that war is not inevitable; (2) that manufacture of atomic bombs should stop at once;

(3) that wholehearted support be given to the proposal that atomic bombs in warfare and other means of mass destruction, "be renounced and prohibited;" (4) that exploration continue for ways and means of establishing effective international controls of the processes of atomic fission; (5) that upon the concurrence of the other major powers to these proposals the nation's present stockpile of atomic bombs be destroyed; (6) that through a covenant prepared through the United Nations and ratified by all the signatory governments compulsory military training of all types be prohibited; and (7) that unqualified support be given to the proposal before the United Nations calling for a universal reduction and limitation of armaments, "with inspection and without the limitations of the veto."⁴⁰

Jerome Davis, author of Behind Soviet Power, addressed the meeting on American-Soviet relations. Long an admirer of Soviet progress, he has frequently contributed articles to the Federation on the Russian question. The press reported that Davis saw the question of American-Soviet relations to be "the greatest moral and spiritual problem facing the American people." Stating that there were evils in Russia as well as in the United States, the speaker suggested that "we must deal with Russia on the basis of the Prophets of the Old Testament, ...not on the basis of American profits."

40. SQB, February-March, 1948, 43-44.

Basically, Davis contended, the present world struggle was not one between Communism and democracy but rather one between "reaction, the old order, the control of property and an emerging new order pushing its way up from blood and tears and strife." The United States, in Russia as in China, was accused of being lined with the forces of reaction.⁴¹

The National Meeting was held from December 27 to 29 and was composed of about seventy-five participants.⁴² Yet its deliberations became the object of much attention throughout the church and nation, largely on a basis of its position on the China and Russia questions related above. The debate precipitated throughout Methodism by the unsolicited publicity given the conference continued and was placed at the door of the General Conference the following spring.

K. The Woltman Affair

Present at the National Meeting was Frederick Woltman, staff writer of the New York World-Telegram and the Scripps-Howard newspapers assigned to cover the conference. Woltman, according to that paper, "had acquired a national reputation as an authority" on the subject of "Communist infiltration of labor, political, social and religious groups." In 1947 he

41. Quoted from the pamphlet, The Facts, printed by the New York World-Telegram, 18.

42. It was at this meeting that the organization's name was changed from Methodist Federation for Social Service to Methodist Federation for Social Action.

was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his "reporting exposing Communism."⁴³ The World-Telegram maintained that Woltman had been attracted to the meeting by an advance copy of the program which listed the keynote speakers and the controversial issues to be discussed. A Federation release dated December 28, 1948, prepared by Clyde R. Miller, Chairman of its Commission for Propaganda Analysis, suggests that Woltman might have been motivated to cover the Kansas City Meeting as a result of the Federation's condemnation of the reporter's smear-attack on the New York City schools for promoting a course to prevent religious and racial prejudice which he tagged "Red." The discussion also alleges that the Catholic Church was linked with the incident.⁴⁴ By way of preparation for the Kansas City Meeting Woltman is supposed to have made a careful study of the background and history of the Federation. He also accumulated a considerable array of facts about each of the speakers to be heard at the meeting. On the basis of this material he wrote an advance article on the Kansas City Meeting which was carried in the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers.⁴⁵

This advance article, under the headline, "Methodist Minority Group Gives Reds Sounding Board for Their Party

43. The Facts, 2.

44. See "One Phase of the Propaganda Campaign to Break Down the Constitutional Guarantee of Separation of Church and State," 8.

45. The Facts, 3.

Line," announced that the National Meeting was to provide a platform for "Communists and fellow travelers to expound the gospel of the Communist line." It said in part, after adding that most of the Federation's "rank and file members and officials" were non-Communists:

Yet, if the federation and its scheduled speakers run true to form in Kansas City, the Soviet dictatorship will be extolled, America's foreign policy will be castigated, Yugoslavia's Communist dictator Tito will be greatly white-washed and Chiang Kai-shek will be denounced.

There followed a list of speakers and subjects and suggestive materials largely taken from the "Social Problems (sic) Bulletin" to demonstrate that they all adhered to "the party line." Of most concern to the Federation, of course, was the listing of Secretary McMichael as a "former youth leader in the Young Communist League and a constant Communist backer."⁴⁶

On December 29 the World-Telegram carried the first of two articles by Woltman filed at the scene of the conference. Headlined in the first two columns of the first page, "Minority in Church Hews to Red Line," the story was introduced by the statement that the "spirit of Christmastide" was being "exploited to ring praise of Russian way in world." It was reported that the distinguishing characteristics of the supposedly Communist-inspired "all-out attack on America's foreign policies" and "glowing defense of the Soviet Union"

46. Reprinted in full, ibid., 3-4.

of the keynote speakers on the Federation program was that "here religion was made the basic argument." The material from the addresses by McMichael, Yu-hsiang, and Davis quoted above, plus the alleged presence of only pro-Soviet literature on the display table, were pointed out as illustrative of things "the Communists have been telling us all along." Exception was taken to the addresses of C.I.O. Research and Education Director, Kermit Eby (misspelled "Erby"), and President Lewis O. Hartman who "warned against 'the blind alley of partisanship' in the federation" and took to task both fascist and Communist totalitarians who were trying "to impose the millenium at once upon the ignorant masses of mankind." This was the story which ran in the World-Telegram with the carry-over part of the text headlined, "Minority Sings Red Hymns." As a matter of fact, all the hymns sung were from the Methodist Hymnal. In the same issue an editorial appeared discrediting the Federation as an "affront" to the "great Methodist Church of this country with its 11,000,000 (sic) members." It further accused the "unofficial adjunct" of the church of using Methodism's "enormous prestige" as "a national sounding board for Communists and fellow travelers" and stated that the editor was confident that once the rank and file of clergy and laymen had learned the facts they would "lose no time in disavowing this curious affront."⁴⁷

47. P. 16.

A letter by Albert E. Barnett, a professor at Garrett Biblical Institute, who was present at the Kansas City Meeting, discloses that Woltman was introduced from the floor and invited by McMichael and the president, L. O. Hartman, to take the floor to reply to the statement of the secretary that the staff writer was describing the Federation "as a religious facade for Communism," and was indicating that the secretary "was once a party member." "Visibly mollified," Woltman is said to have replied to the invitation:⁴⁸

I am convinced that you are not Communists, however; I must stand or fall as a newspaper man on what I have written. I have nothing further to say.

The press did not carry Woltman's confession. Instead, the following day, December 30, another article by the writer appeared in the Scripps-Howard chain. This story dealt largely with the content of the resolutions mentioned earlier in this study which were accused of ignoring completely "the threats of Russian imperialism, of the revived Communist International and of Communist infiltration tactics in America." It was observed that the resolutions would eventually be presented to the Methodist Church itself for adoption. This article suggested that the writer was somewhat

48. Reprinted in full in Alabama Christian Advocate, February 26, 1948, 3. Originally a letter to Newsweek, January 9, 1948, in response to its report of Kansas City Meeting in issue of January 12, 1948, 69.

bewildered that the delegates who drew up these resolutions attacking American policy had "no use for Communism," as "was evident."⁴⁹ That the Federation could take such positions and yet go on record unanimously for the following declaration was from all appearances beyond his power of comprehension:⁵⁰

Social action belongs to the essence of Christianity. It is neither an 'extra' nor an appendix. Christianity is religion with a distinctive character. Its exultation of moral values and its profound concern for the welfare of persons distinguishes it among religions....

The Methodist Federation for Social Action is not less religious because it emphasizes Social Action. That merely makes it religious in Christian terms. It proposes the Christianization of society, nothing more, nothing less. It 'fronts' neither for Communism nor for Capitalism. Its only 'ism' is Christianity.

Aside from innumerable side-stories distributed through its affiliate, United Press, the only other editorial of the Scripps-Howard chain was entitled, "Loyal Methodists Condemn," which hailed the prompt and firm repudiations of the Federation by "distinguished Methodist preachers and leaders." Consoling, the editorial reassured the Methodist leaders that "their loud-speaking, trouble-making" Federation had not "so far done their church serious harm." It then in effect admonished the church never to let it happen again and

49. The Facts, 8.

50. Albert E. Barnett, op. cit., 3.

suggested that preparations be made to "detach" the Federation at the next General Conference "from the Methodist Church and deny it the protection and prestige of that name."⁵¹

The immediate response of the Federation officially to this highly-publicized attack was to clear McMichael of the charge of membership in the Young Communist League, as claimed by Woltman. In his release of December 30 the writer, while not withdrawing his charge, reported McMichael's denial of it and followed with a listing of what was called "a succession of Communist fronts," including the Civil Rights Congress, American Peace Mobilization and American Youth Congress, which the secretary had supported. At one time, Woltman alleged, McMichael was one of the seven vice chairmen of the American Peace Mobilization and, from July, 1939 until it expired late in 1941, the head of the American Youth Congress.

McMichael has denied ever having been a member of the League or having attended any of its meetings. The New York Times, which on December 28, 1947, had published a dispatch from the United Press referring to McMichael as "former chairman" of the League, admitted its error in a release on March 21, 1948, and added that the secretary was not "connected with any other Communist organization."⁵²

51. The Facts, 11.

52. Reprinted in SQB, April, 1948, 52.

The New York World-Telegram, however, has never retracted its statement. In fact, in a special publication released to answer Federation charges of deliberate distortion, misrepresentation, and falsification against Woltman's reporting, the newspaper has maintained its position and has even stated that it knows individuals who were members of the American Youth Congress and the Young Communist League "when McMichael was a member of both and who are willing to say so."⁵³ McMichael has never denied his association with the American Youth Congress. While at Emory University in Atlanta, he was elected chairman of the National Student Y.M.C.A. and co-chairman of the National Intercollegiate Christian Council, representing all American college Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.'s. This Council was one of some seventy American youth groups federated in the American Youth Congress, to which the Council sent McMichael as official delegate in 1939. It was on that occasion that he was elected to the head-post of the Congress.

The Executive Committee investigated the charges against McMichael and by unanimous vote of its meeting of January 30, 1948, circulated a letter to the church dated February 5, 1948, calling attention to an accompanying release discrediting "the false reports" of the Kansas City Meeting by Woltman. The letter desired that "the truth be

53. The Facts, 16.

known" and that the recipient recognize that the attack was leveled primarily not at any one person or any minority group of Methodists but rather at "the right of every Methodist minister to a free pulpit and of every American citizen to freedom of belief and freedom of speech."⁵⁴ The release contained several pages of mimeographed documentary material prepared to disclose the erroneous nature of the Woltman accusations.

The pamphlet distributed by the World-Telegram in answer to the counter-charges of the Federation carried reprints of its articles and editorials on the Kansas City incident, but, for the most part, it was aimed at discrediting item for item the fifteen-page mimeographed "Report on Kansas City Meeting" prepared by the Federation and a letter of Clyde R. Miller, chairman of the Federation's Commission for Propaganda Analysis and professor on leave of absence from Columbia University, to the trustees of that institution demanding that they rescind the Pulitzer Prize awarded to Woltman in 1947. The demand was rejected and the agency so informed by a letter from Carl W. Ackerman, Dean of Columbia's School of Journalism, who stated that such a step "would be incompatible with our academic heritage."

54. Signed by President Robert N. Brooks and Recording Secretary Thelma Stevens. President Brooks succeeded Lewis O. Hartman as President of the Federation upon his election at the 1947 Annual Meeting. The letter was reprinted in the Alabama Christian Advocate, February 26, 1948, 3.

The newspaper's publication closed with a bibliography of the supposedly "Communist-Front Connections" of McMichael, Ward, and Miller.⁵⁵

This controversy raged for months and excited interest throughout the church. Both sides through their statements awaited the 1948 General Conference, for it was commonly felt within the church that the total effect of the incident would be registered at the spring meeting of the governing body of the church. The last editorial by the World-Telegram, it will be recalled, urged the membership of the church to mobilize for action against the Federation at the Conference. Owing to occasional new stories sent out by certain sections of the press during the winter to New York City and the Middle West particularly, a good deal of hysteria was stirred up in anticipation of the General Conference meeting, resulting in the preparation of several memorials asking that the Federation be prohibited the use of the name, "Methodist," as suggested by the World-Telegram editorial.

The June issue of the Bulletin following the Conference reported the effect of the meeting upon the Federation in its first-page headline, "Methodist Federation for Social Action Comes Through General Conference with Colors Flying."

55. The accusations were largely ones of the "guilt-by-association" variety and the Communist-tagging leaned heavily for verification upon the list of subversive organizations drawn up by Attorney General Clark.

No unfavorable action against the Federation was taken. The few conservatives who were reportedly "out for blood" were given every consideration and patiently heard by the Committee on the State of the Church, who received the above memorials, but their efforts were fruitless. To all such memorials the General Conference voted "non-concurrence." In fact, a subcommittee of the Committee on the State of the Church had brought in "a ringing endorsement of the MFSA."⁵⁶ As it happened, however, the threat of a general railway strike hastened the adjournment of the Conference and forced the withdrawal of every item likely to cause extended debate, of which the endorsement was one. So it was that the campaign inaugurated by the Scripps-Howard chain and its affiliate, the United Press, to discredit the Federation came to an inglorious finish, leaving the organization unofficial, free, independent and uncurbed. Indeed, an amendment to legislation which enlarged and financed more adequately the Methodist Information Service was unanimously passed instructing that office "to accept and exercise the responsibility of correcting all such press misrepresentation of Methodists in the future."⁵⁷

The Federation came out from under the cloud of suspicion raised by Woltman's smear-campaign a stronger

56. P. 81.

57. Ibid., 86.

organization. For every member, and there were few, who resigned because of the attack, several were gained. The secretary was able to report unqualifiedly after the Conference that the organization "is larger and stronger now than at any time in its history."⁵⁸ Its membership today includes some fifty-five hundred or more clergy and laymen of the church, more than double that of five years ago. The increase is not primarily the result of the Woltman affair. The growth is largely the result of the broadening of the program and bringing in of the South by the new executive secretary. The present leadership is confident, as one of its vice presidents, W. Earl Ledden, has predicted, that, "The greatest days of service for the MFSA are yet ahead."⁵⁹

58. Loc. cit.

59. Quoted in loc. cit.

PART III

UNIQUENESS OF THE FEDERATION

AND ITS

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

CHAPTER IX

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FEDERATION AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

The Methodist Federation for Social Action is one of the denominational social-action groups that was raised up by the social gospel movement shortly after the turn of the century. By 1920 most of the large denominations had official, institutionalized agencies for social action. Observing the Methodist Federation against the background of this general pattern, one is immediately impressed by the unique role it has played in the social movement of American Protestantism. Unlike the other denominational social-action groups, the Federation has maintained continuously an unofficial relationship to the Methodist Church. The freedom of movement inherent in this status has enabled the Federation to develop a radical program that at once sets it apart from the other denominational agencies. Moreover, the inspirational, non-executive function germane to its unofficial capacity has empowered the Federation to exert an influence upon the church that has helped immeasurably to procure for Methodism the reputation of being the denomination most influential in promoting the social gospel in America. In this and the following chapter we shall indicate the significance of these distinctive characteristics of the Federation both for Methodism and for American Protestantism

generally.

A. Significance of Its Unofficial Status

One with only a casual knowledge of the Federation's radical program and the criticism it has received through the years might assume that the organization has remained an unofficial adjunct of the church primarily because it was unable to gain the official sanction of the church. Such has hardly been the case. The unofficial status of the Federation has, on the other hand, been one of the closely-guarded traditions of its leadership ever since the organization first applied for recognition at the General Conference of 1908.

Initially, the Federation's aversion to full recognition as the official social-action commission of the church grew out of a fear that such recognition would departmentalize the social message of Jesus and thus result in its acceptance as merely one of many executive phases of the church's program rather than as an emphasis or spirit that should permeate all of the agencies of the church. The first official statement on the church and social problems adopted by the General Conference of 1908 counseled to this effect:¹

And now we summon our great church to
continue and increase its works of social
service... We demand of every agency and

1. G.C.J., 548.

organization of the church that it shall touch the people in their human relationships with healing and helpfulness, and finally be it remembered, that we cannot commit to any special agencies the charge that all the church must keep.

Interestingly, this statement was prepared by a sub-committee of the Committee on the State of the Church composed of three members of the Federation, viz., W. M. Balch, Levi Gilbert, and Daniel Dorchester, Jr. Throughout its history the Federation has been emphatic in its conviction that to maintain its vitality social Christianity must be regarded primarily as a movement. To delegate the promotion of social Christianity and the application of its principles solely to a standing committee appointed by the Fourth Quarterly Conference of the local church, the organization has contended, would tend to destroy the dynamic quality essential to the movement. This is one of the reasons the Federation has preferred to remain an unofficial agency. The unofficial status enables it to pursue a policy of imbuing all of the church organizations already existing with the social message. To this end the barrage of pamphlets on the meaning of social service for the pastor, district superintendent, Epworth League, church women, foreign missions, and so on was prepared by the Federation in its initial period. The organization has adhered to the above policy as set forth by Balch in his Report to the General Council in 1909. There he revealed that one of the reasons the term "federation" was

selected as the name of the organization was that it suggested the "fundamental" purpose of the agency better than any other, viz., "to co-ordinate Methodist bodies" already existing in social service activities "rather than to multiply new organizations" within the church with the official responsibility of caring for the social expression of the gospel.²

The Federation's fear of departmentalizing the social gospel was but one part of a larger fear of institutionalism. This fear occasionally led Harry F. Ward to question the wisdom of sustaining any institution over an indefinite period of time. Underlying this suspicion was the conviction that an institution has often in the course of its history been given prominence over the cause for which it was originally created. In one place Ward expressed himself in this regard as follows:³

It has long been a question with me whether institutions ought not to have a time limit as does the physical life of man. How to keep them from formal routine and then decay, is an almost unanswerable question unless they can be reborn, or can retire and let their children carry on in new form.

Apathy of the social sensitivity of American Methodism during the period of industrialization was one of the things that had inspired the organization of the Federation. It

2. Minutes, Report of Secretary, July 20, 1909, 13.

3. SSB, October 15, 1925, 1.

had been created to revive and expand the original social concern of the church. To have attached itself to the old institution as its official "social oracle" would have increased the chances of its being swallowed up by the institution that it had been created to revitalize.

Beyond all else, however, the basic reason for the maintenance of the unofficial relationship of the Federation to the church has been the positive conviction that this status is the most effective solution to the problem of espousing the revolutionary dynamic of religion within a conservative institution. F. Ernest Johnson has come to a similar conclusion on this general problem in an article written in 1943 entitled "The Function of Unofficial Social Action Groups." He concluded that, because of the slowness with which the church as an institution reacts to social change, "the leaven of social reconstruction must be found in small unofficial fellowships."⁴

There are obvious reasons why the church does not respond readily to demands for radical social change such as those to which the Federation is committed. On the practical level, to be "a going concern," to borrow Johnson's phrase, the church of necessity must depend for its financial support upon the people of means who derive their living from the existing order. Increasingly, as the church expands and

4. SQB, October, 1943, 1-3.

enlarges its program it becomes involved in the existing economic order. As a voluntarily-sustained institution, the larger its financial undertakings the more dependent it becomes upon those people who are able and willing to underwrite such a program. The end-result of this process, as intimated in Making Methodism Methodist, is that the larger policy-determining churches of Methodism are found today in the middle class suburbs of America. By and large, the middle class is the beneficiary of the existing order and dependent upon it for its sustenance. As long as the church must look to this group for its maintenance it will be predisposed to a defense of the status quo. In presenting their memorial attacking the church for its statements on the economic order, statements which they interpreted as being disloyal to American institutions, the one hundred members of the California Laymen's Methodist Committee reminded the General Conference of 1936:⁵

We lay members have held or are now holding important offices in the church and through the years have supported it with our services and our means.

The statement implied that the church, by denouncing the injustices of the present economic order, might be cutting off the hand that feeds her.

Another reason for the church's conservative bent is

5. Quoted in S&B, May, 1936, 3.

its large interest in conserving the past. This factor, together with the tendency to invest its values with a transcendental quality, makes the church less conducive to decisive social pressures than secular institutions are. Johnson has a picturesque phrase for describing this attribute of the church. There is, he says, "no galloping technology in liturgy and homiletics with which the church must keep up or be palpably outmoded."⁶ Through loyalty to its dogma, particularly that dealing with its transcendental reference, the church has probably been the last institution to take advantage of the enlargement of knowledge and the progress of science. A man's religion is not as amenable to the scientific method as is his government or schooling. Perhaps that is why the General Conference of 1924 in its highly-praised endorsement of its unofficial "gadfly" authorized the Federation "for the purpose of scientifically studying the social problems" of the day "in the light of the ethics of Jesus."⁷ The church itself could not undertake such a project without exercising extreme caution for fear of causing another schism within the fellowship. One will recall that it was this matter of church "unity" that was given as the reason for dismissing Geer and Fitzpatrick from the Board of Education in 1936.⁸

6. *Op. cit.*, 1.

7. *GCJ*, 599. Italics by the author.

8. See Chapter VII, 222ff.

Yet, despite its conservatism on the horizontal social dimension, Methodism is dedicated to a realization of its vertical Christian ideals. Irrevocably the Christian faith is committed to a revolutionary gospel that demands constant social change. Indeed, the outgoing nature of the gospel, with its insistence upon a better tomorrow, is its revitalizing quality. It was largely to ensure the maintenance of this prophetic note in religion that the Federation was organized. Unquestionably, it was the performance of this function, with all the controversy entailed in it, that necessitated the assumption of an unofficial relationship to the church proper. Only as it has been essentially free and independent of the conservative forces of the larger institution has the Federation felt able to deal prophetically with the shortcomings and injustices of the existing social order.

The Federation has proclaimed since its founding that it is commissioned by the church to do an inspirational and educational work. The former responsibility entailed the envisioning of the new social order and the latter the prescribing of the ways of obtaining it. Harry F. Ward has often emphasized the twofold function that has marked its program throughout its history. In The New Social Order he says characteristically:⁹

9. P. 334.

One is prophetic and the other educational. They (the churches) are to show the future to mankind; they are to proclaim what ought to be over against what is, and they are to arouse the will of man to achieve what ought to be. But also they are to show the way; they are to teach mankind how to reach the goal of its ideal.

We have dealt with the expression of this function in the last section. In goading the church, and mankind in general, in the direction of the Christian ideal the Federation has of necessity embraced the unpopular task of raising fundamental questions about the nature of the economic order, political controls, educational controls and so on.

Proof positive that an official Methodist social-action agency could not have the elasticity or spontaneity to fulfill the prophetic function of Christianity is the recurring reaction and attack of the conservative forces within the church that have been heaped upon the Federation and its program in the past. That conservative forces have been successful in removing progressive church leaders from office, such as Geer and Kirkpatrick in 1936, leaves little doubt of what would be the fate of an official progressive social agency within the church. In the end, the work of conscientiously applying the social principles of Jesus is laid upon a small unofficial group, a "sect" or "cell" group within the church. Through arduous discipline the small unofficial group takes up the "Cross" and implements the political, economic, and cultural goals that a

revolutionary gospel requires. In this connection Ward, reflecting upon the happenings of the recently-adjourned General Conference of 1924, said:¹⁰

The issue between an official social service body and a voluntary organization boils down to this: the work of applying the principles of Jesus to the social order requires those engaged in it to be continuously in the minority. An official organization can not afford to stay in that position. We cannot afford not to be.

Similarly, Ward's co-worker, Francis J. McConnell, observed at a dinner meeting of the Federation at the seat of the General Conference in 1940 as follows:¹¹

We have had our trials -- all sorts of trials -- but we have done some very wise things, and one of those wise things, and the only one I have insisted on is never to get tied up with any official organization. We have been approached time and again and asked if we would join with this or that official church organization. Whenever the request was made to me I said, 'No,' because the minute you do that, and accept any kind of grant of any sort, you are tied and can't go and do what you please.

McConnell, while president, voiced the conviction expressed here; namely, that the unofficial status of the Federation has been largely responsible for the fact that it has been able to maintain its radical program and to have survived to this day.

10. SSB, June 15, 1924, 3-4.

11. Quoted in SQB, June, 1940, 3.

B. Significance of Its Unofficial Status
For Its Radical Program

The significance of the Federation's unofficial status for its radical program has been suggested throughout. Nowhere is it stated more emphatically, however, than in the keynote address of then President Lewis O. Hartman at the highly-publicized National Membership Meeting of the Federation at Kansas City, Missouri in December, 1947. Having listed the advantages that would accrue through obtaining the endorsement of General Conference as an "official" organization of Methodism -- the increased membership, the added weight of its pronouncements, and a regular appropriation of funds --, he concluded:¹²

The proposal (to seek official recognition) has its elements of attractiveness. I am of the opinion, however, that the Federation's non-official status is indispensable if the organization is to continue its pioneering work in the social field and preserve its cutting edge. We appreciate the name 'Methodist' in our title, and seek in every way to protect it... We are also grateful for the 'blessing' of the General Conference of 1944 in the words of the Discipline: 'For three generations the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial) has pioneered in the field now under consideration (The Church and Economics). It has a history of achievement in stimulating thought and action of which the church is proud.' We shall not, I trust, be tempted to become just another official organization.

12. Reprinted in SQB, February-March, 1948, 19.

The unofficial status of the Federation is indispensable "if the organization is to continue its pioneering work in the social field and preserve its cutting edge." This last clause should be underscored. The radical program of the Federation has been one of its distinguishing characteristics since its founding in 1907.

The Federation has been the spearhead of the church in the social application of Christianity. Pioneer, shock troop, vanguard, forerunner and prophet are but a few of the other terms that have been employed to designate the advance position that has characterized the Federation's role in the historic social movement. It earned this reputation initially when in 1907 it drafted the Social Creed which was adopted by the General Conference of 1908 as the official position of the church on the social problem. The radical position expressed in the masthead of the Bulletin today leaves no doubt that it has maintained its forward position. No other social-action agency among the larger denominations claims to approach such a position.

With the exception of platforms of minor political parties, the Social Creed formulated by the Federation was the first comprehensive declaration of social principles in this country. It anticipated by more than four years the platform of the Progressive Party of 1912 which embodied some of the same proposals. Upon its adoption, in somewhat extended form by the Federal Council of Churches within a

year after the formulation, it became recognized throughout Christendom as the social platform of Protestantism. Since that day Methodism has been generally acknowledged the leader of Protestantism on social issues and the Federation has been its vanguard.

Prominent church leaders early attested to the prophetic role that Methodism would play in the social movement after its adoption of the Social Creed. In a placard headlined "Prophetic Words" printed about 1915 by the Federation Washington Gladden was quoted as saying:

I have wondered these past months, if God has not chosen the Methodist Church to lead in the social movement in this country.

As early as 1910 Walter Rauschenbusch declared before the students of a western university:¹³

The Methodists are likely to play a very important part in the social awakening of the American Churches... They have rarely backed away from a fight when the issue was clearly drawn between Jehovah and Diabolus... Their leaders are fully determined to form their battallions on this new line of battle, and when they march, the ground will shake.

It could hardly be denied that Rauschenbusch was speculating on the role that the Federation was playing and would continue to play in marshalling the Methodist forces for social action. Within the framework of the Federal Council of

13. Reprinted in CSO, 23-24.

Churches he worked in close cooperation with Harry F. Ward. He probably received his most intimate knowledge of Methodism's social efforts through this contact. In 1916 Elias B. Sanford, Honorary Secretary of the Federal Council, in his history of the origin of the Council paid tribute to the advance social position of Methodism in praising the prophetic social leadership of Harry F. Ward. Reflecting upon his earlier association with Ward in Chicago, Sanford said:¹⁴

...The young Methodist preacher was preparing to give leadership that has been a potent factor in placing the great Methodist fellowship at the front in facing the social and religious problems of the hour.

To spearhead Methodism's social thought and action has, thus, been a cherished function of the Federation since its origin. This spirit has dominated Federation policy since it was first set forth, as has been seen, by Herbert Welch who early foresaw the role of the church in social action to be to "pioneer the way into new paths of social effort, then yield the leadership to other agencies."¹⁵ That this policy has been a deliberate part of Federation philosophy throughout its history is obvious from a reading of the last section. At the outset, before other official agencies of the church had undertaken the task, the Federation emphasized the relation of Methodism to community

14. OHF, 56.

15. See Chapter IV, 80-81.

service. It also urged as an immediate program for the church such forward-looking measures as one day's rest in seven, reduction of the hours of labor, a living wage and industrial safety. Gradually as other church agencies included community service in their programs, the Federation was left free to devote its full energies to what had appeared from the first to be its basic task, the securing of a Christian social order -- trying to find out what it means and how it may be realized.

The pursuit of this task laid bare the radical direction of the Federation's program; that is, in the true sense of the word, it insisted upon getting at the root of things. Not so much after the fashion of wielding an axe and cutting things down, as Francis J. McConnell pointed out in 1913, but rather more after the fashion of digging with a spade at the root of the tree of life to let in more light.¹⁶ For the Federation, as has been seen, at the heart of this problem of securing a new social order lay the economic order, those activities and relationships by which are secured the material goods necessary for the maintenance and development of life. How might the economic order become Christian in its form, its motives, its end, its spirit? Here increasingly lay the organization's main field of inquiry and action from the close of the first

16. MM, 188-89.

World War until 1944 at which time the administration of Harry F. Ward and Francis J. McConnell came to an end. Since that time the reconstruction of the economic order has also been an essential part of a broader program.

We may summarize a few of the landmarks of the vanguard action of the Federation: (a) The long-running dispute with the Western Book Agents over union-recognition that flared up at the General Conference of 1916 betokened the Federation's pioneering nature; (b) The Bulletin on "The Russian Question," issued in 1919, a day when courage was required to make any reference to Soviet Russia other than one of severe condemnation, provoked a furore within the church. Yet ten years later much of what was said in that publication was calmly read without disapproval in the daily press. (c) The Conference on Christianity and the Economic Order held in Evanston in 1922 by the Federation was probably the first church gathering in this country to be devoted entirely to the discussion of the ethical aspects of economics. Since then it has been followed by others sponsored by various denominational social-action agencies and the National Catholic Welfare Conference. (d) The publication in January, 1923, of the Bulletin issue, "The Communists In the United States." It set down the history and program of the Communists, then under cover, with W. Z. Foster and other leaders under indictment in the Michigan case. As has been seen, the article did not endorse

Communist philosophy or tactics; it did raise the issue of freedom of speech and assembly. Within five years the party was meeting in New York City's largest auditorium, Madison Square Garden, with Foster as one of the speakers.

(e) The post-war predictions in the pre-war Bulletin of October, 1941, that the close of the war would bring a break between the western world and Russia and the development of the old antagonisms between capitalist and socialist society -- even to the extent that the isolationist caucus of the United States would become interventionist in its determination that capitalism would be preserved in Europe -- are now common knowledge.

The Federation has closely guarded its pioneering reputation. As it has passed each quadrennial milestone it has reminded itself that the final test of the pioneer is his willingness and capacity to keep on going forward. The reorganization of the agency in 1944 was an occasion for reconsidering the wisdom of this tradition. The responses to the questionnaire distributed to the membership at that time revealed the emphatic conviction that the Federation's vanguard activity was more indispensable than ever. Thelma Stevens, Executive Secretary of the Department of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities, Woman's Division of Christian Service, of the Board of Missions and Church Extension, registered the general sentiment of the membership in an article at the time giving her ideas of

what the future of the Federation should be. She said in part:¹⁷

The history of the Methodist Federation for Social Service reveals conclusively that the organization has always launched out ahead and dared to present needs and facts that were sometimes 'taboo' and usually not very popular with the general church constituency. The unofficial status of the organization made certain things of this nature possible.... The need for the same pioneer spirit exists today....

The analysis of the replies to the Referendum sent out by the Ad Interim Committee also verified this opinion. It stated:¹⁸

We must recognize that training a 'vanguard' will continue to be the function that can only be exercised by the unofficial fellowship. It is probable also that no official agency will wrestle very strongly for a strengthened discipline within the Church. And in the field of social action the free fellowship will continue to function with a flexibility not possible to the projected official organization....

The experience of other denominations had demonstrated conclusively for the membership that the radical vanguard activity associated with the work of the Federation could not be done by an official agency, no matter how progressive its staff. The present administration adheres to the Federation's pioneering tradition.

17. SQB, October, 1944, 1.

18. SQB, Analysis by Franklin H. Littell, June, 1944, 4.

C. A Survey of Professional Opinion on Degrees of
Denominational Influence in Promoting the Social Gospel

That the Methodist Federation for Social Action has contributed to the development of the growing social concern of American Protestantism is indisputable. To weigh with accuracy, however, the comparative influence of the Federation in developing the social spirit of modern Protestantism is a difficult, almost-impossible task. Nevertheless, the occasional expression by Federation enthusiasts of the opinion that the organization has been the most influential social-action agency in promoting social Christianity encourages one to attempt to measure the validity of such a claim. Although no precise assessment of the influence of the Federation is verifiable, the opinions of leaders of religious social thought and action of other denominations as to the influence of the various denominations on the promotion of social Christianity would seem to have some significance for the question under consideration. Motivated by this idea the author undertook such a survey of opinion. The issue of comparative denominational influence on the promotion of the social gospel was raised with persons of other fellowships who are active professionally in the field of social thought and action.

More than forty personal letters were addressed to representatives of thirteen of the larger denominations and

of five interdenominational agencies. One member each of the Hebraic and Roman Catholic faiths also was consulted. No Methodists were knowingly included. The church affiliations of the representatives of the interdenominational agencies were not sought. Nor was the author personally acquainted with any of the group.

In order that the survey might be as objective as possible, the letter was written on stationery without a letterhead to hide the denominational affiliation of the author. The letters were postmarked Mystic, Connecticut which might possibly have erroneously suggested to some of the group that the sender had received his theological training at Yale University, a school usually recognized as a Congregational institution. A copy of the letter follows:

I am writing a dissertation on one of the denominational social-action groups. In an effort to support the thesis that this group has been more progressive and more influential than the others, I should like to put to you the following question for your consideration and response:

Which denomination do you consider has been most influential in promoting the social gospel?

In collecting a comprehensive list of persons vitally interested in the field of church social action your name has been suggested to me by several persons as one who would be both qualified and interested in this project. Enclosed is a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience.

One will note immediately the general statement of the issue.

This was done to avoid weighting the question in order that a certain type of answer might be obtained.

The response was quite unusual, particularly in view of the fact that the letter was sent out during the summer vacation season when many were away from their offices. There was approximately an eighty-seven per cent return of answers, or thirty-five responses, to be exact. The length of the replies varied. Some answered in a few sentences, but a surprising number conscientiously entered into a more extended discussion of the issue than had been expected. There was little bickering over the use of terms.

Of the thirty-five respondents, twenty-three, or approximately sixty-five per cent, recognize the Methodist Church as the fellowship which has been most influential in promoting the social gospel. The rest of the replies register a variety of opinions. Some of the respondents are currently impressed by the publication of the Congregational-Christian Church, Social Action. Others refuse to venture a definite opinion. Interestingly, all of the representatives of interdenominational social-action agencies call attention to the work of Methodism in the social field. Of more importance for this study is the fact that, although the Federation is an unofficial agency and was not mentioned in any way in the questionnaire, its significance for Methodist social activity was drawn out for special consideration in several of the more detailed answers.

Three reasons were repeatedly given for the selection of the Methodist Church as the most influential in promoting the social gospel. One is the numerical size of the church and the fact that it touches almost every community in the United States. It was pointed out that this factor gives Methodism an unusually fine channel for influencing social patterns on the local level. Another reason given is the influence that the Social Creed has exerted on the nation through its adoption in expanded form by the Federal Council as the "Social Creed of the Churches." The other explanation, intimated above, is the pioneering service rendered the denomination by the Federation. Since this has a more direct bearing on this study a few of the comments should be recorded.¹⁹

One letter, that of an executive associated with the Federal Council of Churches, emphasizes that much of his impression that the Methodists have the most impressive "record of sustained interest and activity" in the social gospel "comes from the influence of the Methodist Federation." Another, from the secretary of another social-action agency, points out the Federation work of Ward and McConnell and its influence on the other departments of the

19. Inasmuch as several of the correspondents, particularly those associated with interdenominational agencies, requested that their identity remain anonymous, no names will be given in references relating to the author's survey.

church and concludes that the Federation has made Methodism "a very strong factor in the development of the social conscience in the protestant churches in America in the last quarter of a century." A third letter, written by a well-known social leader of the Congregational-Christian Church, states that in his opinion the Methodists have done more than any other denomination to advance the social gospel in this country largely because of the leadership of Ward and McConnell, two men "of enormous potency" who "pulled few punches." Another response from a Professor of Social Ethics mentions the Federation and calls attention to the "ethically-centered and fellowship ethos" as over against "a theologically-centered discipline" that has been developed within Methodism. Interestingly, a letter from another executive of a social-action agency practically equates the Federation and Methodism in casting a vote for the church's "vigorous" leadership in promoting the social gospel.

One of the replies, that of a former secretary of the United Christian Council for Democracy, outlines so closely the thesis of this study that it deserves particular attention. The respondent relates that his experience as head of the united half dozen unofficial church social-action groups warrants the unqualified conclusion that the Methodist Federation was the "most progressive and most influential in promoting the social gospel." Speaking of the progressiveness of the Methodist agency, he writes:

The reason I say it was more progressive than any of the others was because it set as its objective the substitution of a planned and democratically controlled economy as promoting the interests and welfare of the majority of the people more than the economy built around the struggle for profits and bending increasingly toward a monopolistic control. It set this objective and while it did not force all of its members to accept this objective it consistently directed its educational propaganda to demonstrate the validity of this purpose to its constituency and promoted social action in line with it.

The activities of this organization have been noteworthy and influential in part also because of the absence of an overall official agency of social education and action. The Church, so to speak, depended upon the unofficial organization to spearhead its efforts in this area and the Methodist Federation for Social Service has always been faithful to this high opportunity.

An analysis of the survey does not warrant any final conclusion that Methodism has been the most progressive and influential denomination in promoting the social gospel. The significance of the responses would seem to lie in the fact that a majority of the respondents, persons who are professionally active in formulating Christian social thought and action throughout the nation, recognize the Methodist Church as the most influential denomination in promoting the social gospel.

That a number of the answers suggest that the Federation has played an important role in Methodism's achievement in the social field is of particular interest for this study. The opinions of this group of respondents would seem to

sustain Lewis O. Hartman's conviction that the Federation has made an immeasurable contribution to the stimulation of social progress in America. In the course of his keynote address at the Kansas City Meeting in 1947 he said:²⁰

We ought to be profoundly grateful for the achievements through four decades of the Methodist Federation for Social Service.... In a very real sense, the Methodists were pioneers among churchmen in the modern social movement. It would be difficult to trace with accuracy the widespread contribution of the Methodist Federation for Social Service in educational, social, industrial, political, and economic advance. It may be truthfully said, however, that the organization has been one of the most powerful forces in American life for the stimulation of social progress and the promotion of human welfare.

Is it an overstatement to say that the reputation that Methodism has procured in the social field during this century has largely come as a result of the stimulation of the Federation? Chapter II demonstrated that the social concern of Methodism inherited from its founder atrophied pitifully during the period of industrialization and urbanization which followed the Civil War. Walter G. Muelder's study of "Methodism's Contribution to Social Reform" disclosed that the church's "leaders of distinction in social Christianity have come to the fore only in the twentieth century."²¹ This would seem to suggest that there might be a high correlation between the social reawakening

20. Reprinted in SQB, February, 1947, 17.

21. In William K. Anderson, MET, 200.

Methodism has experienced during the last four decades and the efforts of the Federation during the same period.

While it is admittedly difficult to trace precisely the causal relations and degree of influence between the socializing activities of the Federation and the social reawakening of Methodism during this century, there yet appears to be ample evidence available to indicate more or less conclusively that the Federation is largely responsible for the reputation Methodism has received among the other large denominations for her pioneering activities in promoting the modern social movement. In another place Muelder points out that "the names of Methodism's greatest leaders in social thought and action read like a Who's Who of the MFSA."²² Could it be denied that these leaders have exerted a strong socializing influence in their various professional responsibilities? A hasty roll-call of a few of the great leaders of the church reveals at once the numerous channels that the Federation has had through which to convey its social message. Within the episcopacy consider the fearless crusading during the earlier period of Herbert Welch, W. F. McDowell, Wilbur P. Thirkield, Edgar Blake, and Francis J. McConnell and more recently that of G. Bromley Oxnam, Lewis O. Hartman, James C. Baker, W. Earl Ledden, William T. Watkins, and Robert N. Brooks to name a few. Within the

22. "What About The Methodist Federation?", Zion's Herald, April 7, 1948, 317.

field of religious journalism observe the influence of James R. Joy, George Elliott, D. D. Thompson, Lewis O. Hartman, and Emory Bucke. The contributions of H. F. Ward, F. J. and C. M. McConnell, Edwin Earp, Grace Scribner, Owen Geer, and Blaine Fitzpatrick to the curricula of the church have had their significance. Within the educational institutions of the church the work of H. F. Rall, D. D. Vaughan, H. F. Ward, W. H. Crawford, Harvey Seifert, Daniel L. Marsh, George M. Coe, Georgia Harkness, Edgar S. Brightman, and W. G. Muelder among many has had a strong social content. In the field of Home Missions the leadership of E. J. Helms, J. D. Darling, J. W. Magruder, F. M. North, George Elliot, and D. D. Forsythe has been outstanding. For years the name of Ralph Diffendorfer has been synonymous with Foreign Missions. The early settlement and Deaconess work of Mary E. McDowell, Lucy R. Meyer, Grace Scribner, Helen G. Murray, and Esther Bjornberg is not forgotten. Other prominent women whose social leadership demands recognition are Winifred Chappell, Amy Blanche Greene, Eleanor Moore, Louisa Litzel, Thelma Stevens, and Mrs. M. E. Tilly. The social influence of innumerable men in the pastorate of the caliber of Ernest Tittle and Henry H. Crane is apparent. Similarly, the work of a number of personalities such as Charles Boss, Carl Soule, Franklin Littell, and Charles Webber whose ministries have been synonymous with social action deserves mention. The list

of Federation members who have held and are holding positions of leadership and influence could be expanded indefinitely into every area of church activity. It is the culmination of the work of social leaders such as these that has procured for Methodism the reputation of having been the most influential denomination in promoting the modern social movement.

Interestingly, perhaps no one has been more convinced of the socializing influence of the Federation upon Methodism than its severest critics. The heated attacks of both 1936 and 1947 carried with them the accusation that the Federation was exerting an influence upon the church all out of proportion to its size. In 1936 the Methodist Laymen's Committee of the Southern California Conference based its attack on the fear that some of the executives responsible for the education of the church youth were misleading them and filling them with "insidious propaganda."²³ Similarly, Rembert G. Smith's pamphlet, Methodist Reds, submitted one piece of evidence after another to demonstrate the influence of the Federation upon The Christian Advocate, Annual Conferences, and the church program in general. In 1947 the Scripps-Howard attack voiced a similar dismay as a reason for its concern. Frederick Woltman's lead article preceding the Kansas City Meeting carried an introduction describing the Federation as the "unofficial but politically-powerful

23. SQB, May, 1936, 3.

adjunct" of the Methodist Church.²⁴ The conscientious opponents of the Federation have been unanimous in their concern over the "unwholesome" influence and effectiveness of the Federation in socializing the church.

The awareness of both social leaders outside the church and of the opponents of the Federation inside the church of the socializing influence that the organization has exerted upon Methodism would seem to warrant a more intense investigation of the matter. Official social-action agencies with less radical programs and more adequate facilities have been less successful in influencing their respective fellowships to any comparative great extent. Cameron P. Hall, Executive Secretary of the Department of the Church and Economic Life of the Federal Council of Churches, for example, admires the "unusually well set up staff and program" for social action of the Congregational-Christian Church and yet observes that a study of the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council revealed that the church is among the more conservative socially.²⁵ In the case of this denomination there would appear to be a wide gulf between its official social-action agency and the larger church program which has not been bridged. Of Methodism, on the other hand, there is general

24. Reprinted in The Facts, 4.

25. Letter to Author, August 25, 1948.

agreement that the church has been penetrated by the social message of Christianity and that the Federation has made a significant contribution in this respect. In fact, one writer in this connection has declared that the Federation "is as indispensable to the Methodist Church as the prophetic movement in the seventh century B.C. was to the Deuteronomic Reform."²⁶ In the final chapter some of the evidence that procured for the Federation this reputation will be examined.

26. Walter G. Muelder, op. cit., 315.

CHAPTER X

THE FEDERATION AS A STIMULUS OF THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE OF THE CHURCH

In 1908 A Statement to the Church announced to American Methodism that the Federation had been organized. Stating that the social agency was "entirely unofficial and desiring to remain so," the announcement declared that the new organization was "to push" the social aspect of Christian truth "into its rightful place of prominence." In Chapter III it was disclosed that one of the major responsibilities of the Federation would be, in the language of the above announcement, to "stimulate" and educate "the conscience of the Church."¹ Surveying the contributions of the organization to the church in his article in Zion's Herald forty years later Walter G. Muelder observed that the objectives of the Federation, "a potent, though unofficial conscience of the church," had "now been largely accepted as the church's own goal."² Chapter IX intimated that Methodism's "unofficial gadfly," to borrow Muelder's phrase, has in good measure been responsible for the reputation that Methodism has received as the denomination which has been most influential in promoting the social gospel in America. Informed contemporary opinion is generally

1. See Chapter III, 55.

2. "What About the Methodist Federation?", April 7, 1948, 315.

agreed that the Federation has made an appreciable impact upon the church and society at large; that, in other words, the unofficial agency has been faithful to its original task of stimulating the social "conscience of the Church." It is the purpose of this final chapter to record some of the evidence that warrants this opinion.

A. The Technique of Permeation

Requisite to a true understanding of the social influence of the Federation is an appreciation of its technique of permeation. From the beginning its method has been one of "education and inspiration."³ As it has developed, this slogan has enfolded the dual responsibility of both showing the future to the Christian and teaching him how to reach it. The stress the leadership has placed upon this responsibility has been indicated from time to time in this study. This slogan, however, has had another historical meaning, one relating to methodology, that is particularly crucial to an understanding of the impact the organization has made upon the social conscience of the church.

Wherever mentioned, this slogan -- education and inspiration -- has also connoted a dynamic quality as over against an administrative one. This distinction was clearly drawn as early as 1909 by the leadership of the Federation.

3. See Chapter III, 67f.

At that time William M. Balch recorded in the Minutes:⁴

It was the common consent that the Federation should in the future as in the past continue its mission of education and inspiration rather than undertake executive functions; that it should not aim to do the social work of the Church but to promote throughout the entire church the spirit of social service and to socialize the present agencies of the church....

It is this unique stress that is largely responsible for the influence the Federation has exerted upon the Methodist Church. Other denominations have preferred to delegate specific responsibility for the social phase of the gospel to an official agency to the exclusion of its other departments. Methodism, however, has continuously relied upon the unofficial Federation to permeate all its appendages with the social message. The result of this policy has been the development of a church program that in its many subdivisions emphasizes the whole gospel. The effectiveness of this technique of permeation was early attested to by the transfer of the original social-service emphasis of the Federation to the Board of Home Missions.⁵ What follows is an elaboration of the workings of this technique within the church.

4. Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee, December 21, 1909.

5. See Chapter V, 103ff.

B. Impact of the Federation upon Methodism

One will recall the early efforts of the Federation in permeating Methodism with a community-service consciousness. The first means of propaganda, of course, was the series of pamphlets prepared for the clergy and local church explaining the meaning and setting forth the principles of community service.⁶ Correspondingly, another series of pamphlets in the Wesleyan tradition on social service was prepared for the various departmental agencies such as the Epworth League, Sunday School, and so on.⁷ To supplement this undertaking the Federation frequently expanded and circulated an impressive list of prominent men available on an expenses-paid basis in various parts of the country for social-service addresses. The widespread popularity and demands of this last service finally forced the Bulletin to abandon its policy of listing the speakers and subjects in 1915. In fact, one will recall, it was this development which suggested to the Federation that the time had arrived for turning over this emphasis to the Board of Home Missions. The effectiveness of the Federation's campaign in behalf of community service within the church was attested to by the General Conference of 1916.⁸

6. See Chapter IV, 75ff.

7. See Chapter V, 112ff.

8. Quoted, Chapter V, 113-114.

The social influence of the Federation upon the General Conferences themselves is also readily discernible. Charged by that body with the responsibility of pointing out periodically the various areas of the church's social conscience that particularly needed pricking, Methodism's unofficial gadfly submitted statements on the social question which were adopted Conference after Conference as the official position of the church. We have noted that the statements on religion and industry adopted between 1908 and 1928, with the exception of that of 1920, were prepared by the Federation. One will recall that it was the General Conference of 1908 which commissioned the agency to prepare a statement for that body in 1912 on the relation of the church to the social question. The General Conference of 1912 declared it to be the executive agency to rally the forces of the church in support of certain measures of social reform. That of 1924 commended the Federation for its "splendid activities" and indicated that it was to continue its task of raising questions as to the social implication of the gospel. In 1928 the Conference reiterated that charge. Since 1928, the time at which the Federation commenced its uncompromising attack on the existing social order, the organization has had to rely largely upon the individual social influence of its members who have been delegates to General Conference, particularly those who have served on the all-important Committee on State of the Church,

for the permeation of that body with its social program. The influence of these individuals upon the social deliberations of the General Conference is immeasurable but nevertheless self-evident. One has but to recall the leadership given that body by such contemporary figures as G. Bromley Oxnam, Ernest F. Tittle, Georgia Harkness, Daniel L. Marsh, Ralph Diffendorfer, Lewis O. Hartman, Earl Ledden, and Robert N. Brooks to indicate the channels of influence open to the Federation.

The recent General Conference of 1948 is a case at point. An examination of the Resolution on The Church and War and Peace which was adopted reveals a similarity to the corresponding resolution issued by the Federation the winter before at its Kansas City Meeting that suggests more than mere coincidence.⁹ The Conference Resolution reported out of Committee on State of the Church tempts one to speculate on the influence of the Federation members on the Committee in preparing the statement. The Conference statement, in terms familiar to the Federation document, denounced "absolute national sovereignty" as "unholy"; declared the utter opposition of Christianity and war -- even affirmed its "sinfulness"; reiterated the Federation's conviction that "war between the Soviet Union and the United States is not inevitable"; expressed concern over "the militarization of

9. See Chapter VIII, 280f., for discussion of Federation Resolution.

the public mind"; called for governmental support of the United Nations' resolution for the control and reduction of armaments; and reaffirmed the stand of the various Methodist organizations in opposition to peacetime universal military training.¹⁰ Reflecting upon the close correlation of these two statements, along with equally progressive and corresponding statements on race relations, Secretary McMichael wrote:¹¹

This General Conference took action to alter official Methodist policy in the field of peace and race relations -- in both cases taking significant steps in the direction of the peace and race relations program of the Methodist Federation for Social Action as adopted at Kansas City.... They will be great weapons on behalf of the historic and present goals and program of the Federation.

This is not to say that the Conference Committee on State of the Church adopted verbatim the viewpoint of Federation members in these instances or that it was wholly dependent upon the unofficial agency for its social vision. There were concessions and compromises and there were obviously other sources of influence. But it could hardly be denied that the Federation was indirectly active in the formulation of the Conference Resolution. In fact, McMichael went on in his comment to point out that the gap that still prevailed between the respective Conference and Federation positions

10. Reprinted in SQB, June, 1948, 83-4.

11. Ibid., 86.

accented the importance of a free and unofficial fellowship which can "go further," which can inspire and yet keep a little ahead of the church as a source of future enlightenment. The weight of Federation opinion at this Conference is illustrative of the impact of the organization upon the General Conferences of Methodism during the last forty years.

1. Influence at the Annual Conference Level

Moving down from the General to the Annual Conference level one observes that the Federation has registered a commendable degree of influence there also. Obviously, it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate comprehensively the impact of Methodism's unofficial gadfly upon the various Annual Conferences. Happily, however, a study has been made of several of the church's larger, metropolitan Conferences in which the Federation, historically urban-centered, would be most likely to have exerted an influence. A doctoratal dissertation entitled The Methodist Episcopal Church and Industrial Reconstruction devotes a chapter to the social-mindedness of the Newark, New York East, Pittsburgh, and Detroit Annual Conferences between 1908 and 1939 as revealed in the social pronouncements of their respective Journals.¹² The impact of the Federation upon these Conferences is

12. Hillman T. Williams, Dissertation for S.T.D. degree, Chapter XI, "Pronouncements in Some Conference Journals," Temple University, 1945.

acknowledged throughout. There follows a summary of some of the findings of that study which are relevant here.

With regard to the Newark Conference, the analysis by Hillman T. Williams reveals explicit evidence of the workings of the Federation upon that body.¹³ In accord with the General Conference recommendation of 1908 that social service commissions be appointed in the various Conferences, the Newark body voted at its meeting following in 1909 that a committee be appointed for the purpose of relating the Annual Conference with the Federation. From that year forward the Journal of the Conference recorded an increasing interest in social Christianity. The social questions given emphasis reflected the periodic emphases and philosophy of the Federation. In 1915, when the Federation was intensely interested in community surveys, the Newark Conference appointed a committee to study the crucial resident industrial and social problems of the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the Conference in cooperation with and as an auxiliary of the Federation. In 1919 when social justice began to come to the fore in Federation emphasis, the Newark fellowship "placed itself on record as desiring to give evidence of its deep interest in the cause of social justice."¹⁴ It denounced the post-war "open-shop" campaign and recorded its

13. See ibid., 228-291.

14. Ibid., 231.

devastating effect upon union organization. It deplored the "impasse" of the coal strike of 1922 and requested the appointment of "a representative commission to study all the facts" and to suggest a plan of settlement based on "justice."¹⁵ In 1925 the Conference recorded its support of participation by all concerned in the control of industry. That same year, in line with the Federation's interest in United States' foreign investments, the Newark body protested the exploitation of the labor of less-developed countries by American investors and the accumulation of great personal wealth as contrary to the teachings of Jesus and recommended the imposition of limitations upon wealth "by taxation and a more equitable sharing by the workers in the products of industry."¹⁶ In 1930 the Conference echoed the sentiment of the Federation in condemning the business cycle with its recurring depression and unemployment. "Ignorance of the economic laws and forces of human society" and "organized greed for gain at the expense of others with rightful claims to a share of the common goods" were blamed; the solution in part was to be found in "just measures of government control" which would make unprofitable "speculative ventures in high finance."¹⁷ These pronouncements which the social-service commission of the Newark Conference was able to steer through

15. Quoted in ibid., 233.

16. Quoted in ibid., 236.

17. Quoted in ibid., 241.

its annual meetings are sufficient to demonstrate the impact of the Federation upon the Conference through its auxiliary commission. While there were obvious compromises of the program of the national office, the distance the Newark body had traveled in the development of its social conscience since the organization of the Federation in 1907 is readily apparent in Williams' study.

In contrast to the Newark Conference, the New York East Conference was caught up by the general social movement before the turn of the century and was one of the groups which agitated for the appointment of a social-service commission by General Conference as early as 1892. Nevertheless, this Annual Conference was unable to organize a social-service commission of its own until 1913; largely, Williams contended, because of a powerful conservative element in its membership. In that year, however, a report was submitted by its commission and adopted supporting the community-service emphasis of the Federation and also its emphasis upon "the necessity of one day's rest in seven for all workers."¹⁸ During the early phase of the depression the Conference urged the Hoover administration to adopt some form of unemployment insurance and to make possible the inauguration of public work projects for the destitute. In 1929 a forthright report

18. Quoted in ibid., 243. See pp. 241-251 for full treatment of the New York East Conference.

the same manner and position as before. The object
of the experiment was to determine the effect of
the different parts of the body on the movement of the
system. The results were as follows: the system was
found to be in equilibrium in the position of the
center of gravity. The results of the experiment are
given in the following table.

Position of the center of gravity	Position of the center of mass	Position of the center of mass
1. In the center of the body	1. In the center of the body	1. In the center of the body
2. In the center of the body	2. In the center of the body	2. In the center of the body
3. In the center of the body	3. In the center of the body	3. In the center of the body
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5. In the center of the body	5. In the center of the body	5. In the center of the body
6. In the center of the body	6. In the center of the body	6. In the center of the body
7. In the center of the body	7. In the center of the body	7. In the center of the body
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The results of the experiment are given in the following table.

of the commission was adopted favoring legislation which would "make it impossible" for injunctions to be issued against unions for carrying on legal activities.¹⁹ Increasingly during the depression the pronouncements of the Conference commission became more uncompromising and reflected the radical spirit of the Federation. Its report of 1935 contained sharp statements against the inequitable distribution of wealth, the placing of profits and property over human welfare and personality, and the motive of acquisitiveness. The 1935 pronouncement decried "the tenderness with which the sacred cow of private profits" was being protected in spite of the "indescribably inhuman" suffering of the masses and disclosed that there had appeared a tendency to liquidate the middle class and the professional group as a result of the program being pursued.²⁰ These statements reflected the personal efforts of personalities of the stature of Frank Mason North, Francis J. McConnell, and Charles C. Webber who were directly concerned with the formulation of the Federation program. The New York headquarters of the organization made the New York East Conference easily accessible for permeation by the Federation.

The Pittsburgh Conference had a social-service commission which began modestly with a few members and grew in

19. Quoted in ibid., 245.

20. Quoted in ibid., 250.

numbers by 1921 to thirty-four to be recognized by the Federation as one of its strongest branches.²¹ In its endorsement of the Federation in 1922 the Conference called upon the church to face the imperative duty of declaring itself with no uncertain sound against the distressing evils of industrial life. In 1923 attention was called to the inability of Methodism to secure unconditional titles to church sites in town "owned" and controlled by mining companies and the effect of the same upon the preacher's freedom of expression. The 1928 Conference went on record against "the belated action" of the United Mine Workers of America for not standing unitedly behind the union-miners of the Pittsburgh area in their struggle against the operators over the Jacksonville agreement. The same session voiced a straightforward demand for a cultural wage, a wage which would provide for a family's "culture as well as its cupboard." The social pronouncement of 1929 called attention to the cooperation of its social-service commission in planning a regional conference of the Federation and declared that "the right to a job is as inalienable" as the more familiar rights of man and "indispensable" to their realization.²² The 1930 session of the Conference set forth the demand of justice that an industry which sets aside profits to guarantee dividends in

21. See ibid., 251-268.

22. Quoted in ibid., 260.

slack times should also set aside funds to guarantee some payment of wages to its employees in periods of unemployment. The report of 1931 served notice to the "buccaneers of business" that "dazzling subscriptions to charity and to Church budgets" were no substitute for the requirements of justice and love.²³ The report of 1933 reflected the reinvigorated demands of the Federation for a new social order following the General Conference of 1932. It stated that "the only alternative" to the catastrophic fluctuations of the present economic order was the establishment of "one in which social ownership and control is gradually and widely inaugurated and developed."²⁴ These pronouncements and others like them in the period investigated by Williams suggest the influence of the Federation upon the developing social consciousness of the Pittsburgh Conference.

The Detroit Conference traversed the same general course in social development as the others.²⁵ After the same fashion its pronouncements closely correlated the periodic emphases of the Federation. Awakening socially at the beginning of the second decade, it stressed the relation of the church to labor and the need of the promotion of community-service projects on the local church level. Recognition was given to the immorality of concentrated wealth.

23. Quoted in ibid., 264.

24. Quoted in ibid., 266.

25. See ibid., 268-279.

During the second decade social regeneration as over against social reform was set forth as the task of the church. An anniversary program for the Federation was held in 1914 in which Secretary Ward as guest of honor spoke on that theme. The struggle against the tumultuous reactionary wave dominated the post-war pronouncements. The economic war of the twenties raised the question of the relative rights of labor and management. The need of industrial democracy was stressed as the solution to the recurring problem. During the depression dole-proposals were denounced as inadequate and unethical in the face of the widespread unemployment. After the fashion of the Federation the immediate need of federal unemployment insurance and old age pensions was advocated. In 1931, as in the Federation, the profit motive of capitalism was subjected to severe criticism as "wrong," "inadequate in process," and "destructive of human values."²⁶ Throughout the thirties the fundamental principles of the existing economic order -- rugged individualism, competition, profit motive, free enterprise -- were denounced in sound Federation tradition. Williams' analysis of the evolution of the social consciousness of the Detroit Conference leaves little doubt that its social voice was tutored to an appreciable extent by the Federation.

That Williams has discerned a definite social

26. Quoted in ibid., 276.

reawakening in these four Conferences during the period in which the program of the Federation has been functioning and has evidenced explicitly and implicitly the bearing of the Federation upon that development is not to say that no other social forces were operative in the process. Nor does it contend that all of the Annual Conferences of Methodism were socially spurred to a similar degree. Many of the predominantly rural, conservative Conferences of the country were untouched comparatively. On the other hand, occasional references in the Bulletin would indicate that a similar analysis of other Conferences, such as those of Nebraska, Rock River, Southern California-Arizona, and Alabama, to name a few, would undoubtedly reveal a similar degree of social permeation by the Federation. All that can be reasonably concluded from the study -- and all that is desired here -- is that between 1908 and 1939 four of Methodism's larger, industrial-area Annual Conferences experienced a social rebirth in which midwife-activities by the Federation were readily discernible and acknowledged. The Annual Conference Journals afford a dependable medium through which the impact of the Federation upon the basic legislative units of American Methodism can be traced.

2. Influence on the Educational Forces of the Church

It is to be expected that an organization as acutely conscious of the contribution of John Wesley to Methodism

as the Federation would place a premium on education. Quite naturally the Federation turned toward the educational forces of the church with its social message. If the church were to be socialized, the facilities which were charged with the training of its ministry had to be permeated with the "other half" of the gospel. It is not possible here to treat exhaustively the fruits of Federation efforts in this direction. All that one can do is to suggest a few of the threads of influence running through the various educational units of the church.

Within the theological schools the Federation has depended largely upon the personal influence of several of its prominent members for the conveyance of its program. Williams included within his study a quantitative analysis of the social subjects offered in the courses of study listed over a period of forty or more years in the yearly catalogues of Boston University School of Theology, Drew University, and Garrett Biblical Institute.²⁷ The results of this analysis suggest a high correlation between the amount of attention given to the social phase of Christianity and the presence of a member of the Federation on the faculty of each school. Before Edwin Earp went to Drew, Harry F. Rall and Era Whitchurch to Garrett, and Harry F. Ward and his successor, David D. Vaughan to Boston -- all vigorous Federation

27. Ibid., Chapter VI, 98-103.

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promoters -- there appeared to be little emphasis given to instruction on the social responsibilities of Christianity.

With regard to Drew, Williams discovered that no distinctly social studies were listed in its catalogue until after the turn of the century. A decided increase was observable after the first decade. Edwin Earp, early a member of the Federation's Executive Committee, was called to Drew in 1910 and taught there until his retirement in the late thirties. In 1930 the number of courses offered by Drew under the heading of Christianity and the Social Order totalled fifteen per cent of all the courses listed as over against twenty-one per cent in Bible and thirteen in religious education. In 1934 Drew offered such courses as The Church and the Labor Group, Christianity and Social Trends, Human Engineering, Principles of Social Ethics, Social Evolution and Channelling Human Conduct. There was no evidence of a drop in the number of social studies offered by the curriculum of the school up to 1939 when Williams concluded his analysis.²⁸

Garrett has probably met more consistently the need of emphasis upon the whole gospel than any other Methodist seminary. It offered its first course in social studies in 1899. Since that time, particularly during the careers of Rall and Whitchurch, an appreciable social emphasis has been

28. Ibid., 99.

discernible in its course of study. Williams, for example, presented a chart listing the various departments of study and giving the total number of courses offered in each department and the percentage that number represented of the total number of courses for 1926.²⁹ In that year twenty courses were offered under the category of Sociology and Social Relations, which represented approximately eight per cent of the total -- third only in quantity to subjects in the fields of religious education and New Testament study. In 1935 fifteen courses were offered in sociology, four in economics, and fourteen in social ethics. The influence of the Federation at Garrett throughout the careers of Rall and Whitchurch was appreciable; annually these educators presented the cause of the Federation to the student body and took student subscriptions.³⁰ The spirit of the Federation continues to flow at Garrett through the dynamic leadership of Georgia Harkness, Albert Barnett, Rockwell Smith, and others.

Concerning Boston, Williams disclosed that at the turn of the century three courses out of seventy-five were offered in social subjects. The sojourn of Harry F. Ward as a member of the faculty of the school about the middle of the second decade is reflected in the changed picture of

29. Ibid., 101.

30. Letter of Winifred Chappell to Author, October 17, 1948.

the course of study in 1918. That academic year ten per cent of one hundred twenty-four courses were presented in the social field.³¹ During Ward's tenure at Boston the office of the Federation was located there. Upon going to Union Theological Seminary, Ward was succeeded at Boston by another Federation member, David D. Vaughan. Following the retirement of Vaughan, the chair of social ethics was temporarily vacant and the social consciousness at Boston lagged considerably until the coming of Walter G. Muelder to the school in the fall of 1945 as Dean and Professor of Social Ethics. Since that date the social consciousness of the school has been revived. The fact that as many graduate students are enrolled in the Department of Social Ethics today as in any other department of the school indicates the fresh social vision that has developed there. A vice president of the Federation, Muelder has brought to the students a first hand knowledge of the program and problems of the organization.

That this and the other seminaries of the church have been permeated by the Federation through the medium of faculty members active in the organization can hardly be denied. The awareness of the activities of the organization has been a contribution in itself. The student memberships that have been recruited and the educational service the

31. Hillman T. Williams, op. cit., 98.

Bulletin has rendered the theological students of the church have not failed to influence the social thinking of these future leaders.

Similar to its contact with the theological schools has been the influence of the Federation upon the Deaconess movement. One must recognize in this instance, of course, that the Deaconess movement and the Federation grew out of the same soil; they were both thrown up by the social re-awakening of Christianity during the last part of the nineteenth century as a result of the industrialization and urbanization of America following the Civil War. In fact, the Methodist Deaconess movement was twenty years old when the Federation was organized. It was an important part of the institutional-church development and was set up for the establishment, manning, and maintenance of hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, and working girls' homes and for the association of trained women with local churches as parish workers. In general the Deaconess movement has found its affinity rather with the organized social work movement than with the dynamics of the Federation. There remains, however, irrefutable evidence that the Federation has exerted an appreciable influence on the Deaconess movement, particularly in the Chicago area.

A letter to the author from Winifred L. Chappell suggests the impact of Methodism's unofficial gadfly upon this group. Referring to the institution for training deaconesses

in Chicago she has written:³²

The influence of the Federation on the women who studied at the Chicago Training School, many of whom went into deaconess work for longer or shorter periods, was very strong, in some cases almost measurable or determinative.

She herself first met Ward and came in touch with the Federation at its Chicago Conference of 1910. As assistant principal of the school Winifred L. Chappell joined with Lucy Rider Meyer, principal of the school, and Esther Bjornberg, the director of field work, in the promotion of the Federation. "The spirit and the program content of the Federation animated and gave substance" and "made an impact on the whole school." Ward frequently lectured at the school and the students were directed to his other Chicago meetings. At least one of the Social Action Conferences of the Federation organized by Wade Crawford Barclay during the depression period was held at the Training School and according to Winifred Chappell it made "a permanent imprint" on some of the students. Among the deaconesses and "ex-deaconesses" who were not only members of the Federation but "who consciously looked to it for leadership and for materials which they used in other organization programs," Chappell recalled, were Helen Grace Murray, long before she became a member of the staff of the Federation; Bertha Fowler,

32. October 17, 1948.

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superintendent of the Philadelphia Deaconess Home during the initial period of the Federation; Amy Blanche Green, associate with Sherwood Eddy and with the Fellowship of Reconciliation in official capacities; Eleanor Moore, who received recognition for her contributions to social awareness in the interracial and other fields in Denville, Illinois; and Maude E. Hamer and Louisa Litzel, who were both active in community work in the rural field of Ohio. "The list could be indefinitely extended." The former associate secretary of the Federation added in her letter that for the most part the "women who have been most aware of the significance of the Federation leadership" have not served in the "organizational set-up of the deaconess work."

Notable exceptions to this generalization, of course, were the afore-mentioned Lucy Rider Meyer, Esther Bjornberg, Bertha Fowler, and Winifred L. Chappell herself. Most illustrative of this trend would undoubtedly be Mary E.

McDowell, who was head resident of the University of Chicago Settlement at the same time that she served on the Executive Committee of the Federation in its early period. To the extent that these and others have been responsible for deaconess programs and activities, Chappell concluded, "They have certainly channeled the Federation message to others."

While the Federation most likely conveyed a similar influence on other deaconess work centers, the preceding is sufficient

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to illustrate the general pattern.

In the realm of church curricula, the impact of the Federation has been more direct. Reference has been made to the responsibility early placed upon members of the organization for supplying regularly materials for the social phase of lessons for publications of the Church School Department in particular.³³ Edwin L. Earp was engaged to conduct the Department of Social Service in the Sunday School (now Church School) Journal as of March, 1909. Previously the Journal had relied entirely upon Francis J. McConnell for interpreting religion in social terms in his Lesson exposition. F. J. McConnell has estimated that over a thirty-year period he contributed well over a million words to Church School publications.³⁴ Harry F. Ward succeeded Earp in 1914 and contributed weekly "The Social Interpretation of the Lesson" over an extended period, with the exception of three months, May to July, 1919, when his notes were suspended as a result of "The Russian Question" issue of the Bulletin. Following this unfortunate incident the Sunday School Journal stated in part:³⁵

In this issue we are re-instating Dr. Ward's comments, and in so doing desire to assure our readers of our complete confidence in Dr. Ward's

33. See Chapter V, 113f.

34. Interview with Author, November 15, 1948.

35. July, 1919, 449.

Americanism. His sincerity and moral earnestness have been manifest in his writings.... His work has been an inspiration and help to multitudes of our readers who will be gratified at the restoration of these valuable notes.

A series by Ward in the Graded Lessons were also used jointly by the Congregational Church. In the same year that Ward's articles began in the Journal the Federation began a regular department, largely prepared by Grace Scribner, in the Adult Bible Class Monthly. Numerous editorial notes and special articles for Church School periodicals have also been prepared through the years upon request. The volume, Christianizing Community Life, prepared by Ward in collaboration with R. H. Edwards, was initially the text for a Voluntary Course of Bible Study for Colleges and was jointly issued by the North American Student Council and the Interdenominational Sunday School Council. The influence of such contributions to the social thinking of the Church School has been officially acknowledged by the church.³⁶

The future generations of the church were not only approached by the Federation through the Church School publications but also through the Epworth Herald, the publication for the youth of the church. The Federation reports prepared for and adopted by the General Conferences of 1908 and 1916 called for the officials responsible to include the

36. See Chapter V, 114.

social implications of Christianity in their youth work wherever possible. The Federation contributed greatly to the carrying out of this charge. It was to this end that The Social Creed of the Churches, edited by Harry F. Ward, was prepared for the former Epworth League, now the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Numerically the volume was a five-figure seller. In 1912 the Federation upon request prepared a pamphlet for the church youth describing methods of social service applicable to the League.³⁷ In 1913 largely at the instigation of the Federation, the Department of Mercy and Help of the League was changed to "Social Service." Members of the Federation were frequently called upon to cooperate with the Youth Institutes in presenting the social challenge of Christianity. Typical of these was Winifred L. Chappell's tour of the Montana and Oregon Institutes in the summer of 1924 which created such a stir that she was invited by pastors to occupy their pulpits on Sundays.³⁸ The impact of the Federation upon the youth of the church has been particularly discernible at their National Conferences. Frequently social ideals fostered by the Federation were accepted by the church youth at their meetings as "the Christian minimum."³⁹ Indeed, from all indications, as has

37. Minutes, Report of Secretary to General Council and Third National Conference, November 29-December 1, 1910.

38. SSB, October 15, 1924, 3.

39. See "Methodist Youth Demand Action," SSB, May 15, 1924, 1-2.

been seen, it was the obvious effectiveness of the work of Federationists Geer and Kirkpatrick among the church youth that led to their summary dismissal from the Board of Education at the General Conference of 1936.⁴⁰ That this pattern of permeation among the youth of the church is not merely historical was attested to in the Report of McMichael to the Kansas City Meeting of the Federation in December, 1947. He said:⁴¹

How gratified we are by the fact that the National Conference of Methodist Youth has written into its constitution a statement specifically providing for cooperation with the Methodist Federation for Social Action and in a special resolution voted: 'We commend the program of the Methodist Federation for Social Action and pledge our support to this prophetic organization.'

It is impossible to record the total evidence indicating the impact of the Federation upon the numerous organizations and departments of the Methodist Church. The foregoing suggests the general influences. Similar Federation agitation leading to the broadening of the total church program to include the whole gospel could probably be demonstrated for the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, the Board of Foreign Missions, the Woman's Society of Christian Service, the Council of Bishops and others. The success of the Federation in permeating these various agencies of the church

40. See Chapter VII, 221f.

41. Reprinted in SQB, February-March, 1948, 28.

during its first twenty years has been intimated in a pamphlet published by the Federation entitled Twenty Years of Social Service in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Intimations of the current continuation of this tradition are found in the Report by McMichael quoted above. Besides the cordial relations established with the youth group of the church, mention is made of encouraging current social thought and action by the Woman's Division of Christian Service, the Board of Lay Activities and Conference Lay Leaders, the Methodist Education Conference, the Methodist Conference on Christian Education, the National Methodist Rural Life Conference, and the Council of Bishops.⁴² While no pretense is made that the Federation is totally responsible for these developments, the participation of influential Federation personalities in the various programs leaves little doubt that they were instrumental in formulating the progressive social platforms referred to.

C. The Technique of Permeation Past and Present

Before closing this discussion of the impact of the Federation upon Methodism a comment is in order with regard to a distinction that might be drawn between the technique of permeation of the former and present administrations of the organization. In the main this is one of degree rather

42. Ibid., 28-29.

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than of kind. Today the technique of permeation of the Federation is more direct than previously. Initially the Federation encouraged the formation of Conference commissions for social service as has been seen. These Annual Conference commissions were looked upon as the basic units for social action. However, as the radical program of the Federation evolved, this approach became less and less feasible. The promotion of the radical program of the Federation was more and more forced back upon scattered individuals with radical leanings. The individual replaced the group as the "cell" of influence. The Federation became in effect and of its own admission a binding link of "fellowship" for isolated radicals throughout the church.⁴³ It was this development that impressed McMichael shortly after he assumed his office and led him to list the organization of Federation Chapters as "channels" of influence as the first "imperative need" of the organization.⁴⁴ The result has been the promotion of Federation units in local churches, colleges, seminaries, and local areas across Jurisdictional lines. Local units so organized are required by the national office to take specific action in at least two instances each year. By thus making the group once again the basic "cell" of influence it can reasonably be surmised that the impact of the Federation

43. See SSB, February 15, 1928, 3-4.

44. See Chapter VIII, 263ff.

upon the church in the future will be more direct at all levels than in the past.

D. Impact on Protestantism

The Methodist Federation has not only stimulated the social conscience of Methodism but also that of Protestantism in general. Reference has been made to the recognition the unofficial agency has received as the spearhead of the Christian social movement. Undoubtedly this has accrued largely through the channel of the Federal Council of Churches. The precedent for the social leadership of the Federation was set through the adoption by the interdenominational body of the Social Creed it had prepared for Methodism in 1908. Benson Y. Landis, for example, has credited the formulation of the Methodist Creed as "unmistakably" the beginning of an organizational "search for definition of the meaning of the Christian Gospel in terms of the pressing social issues of modern society."⁴⁵ Because of the historical significance of that event for this study and Protestantism a brief exposition of the chief incidents relating to it would seem to be in order.

1. The Social Creed of the Churches

Frank Mason North has been mistakenly acknowledged

45. RGS, 84.

as the author of the Social Creed. Charles H. Hopkins has made this error.⁴⁶ Actually, Harry F. Ward was chiefly responsible for composing the original statement adopted by the General Conference of 1908. Evidence to this effect was recorded in the Minutes of the activities of the Federation at the seat of the General Conference of 1908. Referring to the formulation of the Creed, it was recorded:

...Harry F. Ward of the Executive Committee gave particular attention to the matter, both in composition and through conferences with the leaders of the General Conference Committee.

Herbert Welch, President of the Federation at the time, has recalled similarly that it was "chiefly through Harry Ward's participation that the Social Creed was first framed and adopted by the General Conference."⁴⁷ Ward had worked in close cooperation at the seat of the Conference with Levi Gilbert and W. M. Balch, vigorous supporters of the Federation who as official delegates were connected with a subcommittee of the Committee on State of the Church dealing with the Church and Social Problems. Interestingly, as it happened, the Creed was written by Ward on the back of telegram forms in a Western Union station at the seat of the Conference in Baltimore.⁴⁸

The confusion surrounding the identity of the author

46. See RGS, 311.

47. Letter to C. C. Webber, May 12, 1942.

48. Interview of ward with Author, June 9, 1948.

of the original Creed has grown out of its inclusion in the report of the "Committee on the Church and Modern Industry" presented to the Federal Council of Churches by Frank Mason North at its First Quadrennial Meeting in Philadelphia the following fall. Paragraph IX of this historical eighteen-page report contained what was to be known as the "Social Creed of the Churches" and was taken almost verbatim from that formulated by the Federation. In praise of this epoch-making report Charles Stelzle said following its presentation:⁴⁹

The statement presented by Dr. North is the greatest paper on this subject that I have ever heard or read, and if I can say to the workmen of America that the Federal Council really means it, it will be the biggest thing that I can say or that I have ever yet said.

Worth M. Tippy, who served as chairman of the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council which grew out of the unanimous adoption of the report, has revealed that North was not only a founder of the Federal Council but also "the directing mind" in the organization of this report and "more than any other one person" responsible for the emphasis of the organization upon the welfare of the masses.⁵⁰

In view of the significant part that the Federation

49. Quoted in Sanford, OHF, 257.

50. FMN, 18.

through the personalities of Ward, North, Tippy, and others played in the history of the Social Creed of the Churches it would seem wise to list it in its entirety as first formulated by the Federation. The original Creed adopted by the General Conference of 1908 read:⁵¹

The Methodist Episcopal Church stands:
 For equal rights and complete justice
 for all men in all stations of life.
 For the principle of conciliation and
 arbitration in industrial dissensions.
 For the protection of the worker from
 dangerous machinery, occupational disease,
 injuries and mortality.
 For the abolition of child labor.
 For such regulation of the conditions
 of labor for women as shall safeguard the
 physical and moral health of the community.
 For the suppression of the 'sweating
 system.'
 For the gradual and reasonable reduction
 of the hours of labor to the lowest prac-
 tical point, with work for all; and for
 that degree of leisure for all which is the
 condition of the highest human life.
 For a release from employment one day in
 seven.
 For a living wage in every industry.
 For the highest wage that each industry
 can afford, and for the most equitable
 division of the products of industry that
 can ultimately be devised.
 For the recognition of the Golden Rule,
 and the mind of Christ as the supreme law
 of society and the sure remedy of all social
 ills.

The statement adopted by the Federal Council the following
 December was essentially the same but listed three additional

51. GCJ, 547.

paragraphs; namely:⁵²

For the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, a right ever to be wisely and strongly safeguarded against encroachments of every kind. For the right of workers to some protection against the hardships often resulting from the swift crises of industrial change.

For suitable provision for the old age of the workers and for those incapacitated by injury.

For the abatement of poverty.

The General Conference of 1912 in turn adopted the Creed in the latter form. The Federal Council expanded the Creed again in 1912 to include provisions for the protection of the family, for the fullest possible development of every child, for the prevention as well as abatement of poverty, for the protection of the individual and society from the social, economic, and moral waste of the liquor traffic, for the conservation of health, and for the right of employees and employers alike to organize. These changes were made "in mutual conference with the Methodist Federation for Social Service."⁵³ The General Conference of 1916 adopted the Creed in this still fuller form. The Federal Council has reaffirmed the "Social Creed of the Churches" -- unmodified further until 1932 -- quadrennially. The revisions made in 1932 came out of the report of a special committee

52. See The Report of the Commission on the Church and Social Service, 18-19. Printed by the Federal Council, 1913 (?).

53. Ibid., 19-21.

having this matter in charge whose chairman was Edward T. Devine, one of the charter members of the Federation.⁵⁴ Notable among these revisions were the paragraphs added relating to race relations and the church and war issue.

Today this document which stems from the Federation stands as a classic in the annals of social Christianity. Widely -- almost universally -- adopted by the Protestant denominations of America, the Social Creed of the Churches has served immeasurably to stimulate the social conscience of Protestantism in America and abroad. In 1919 it was adopted by the international convention of Young Men's Christian Associations and in 1920 by the national convention of the Young Women's Christian Association.⁵⁵ Of the influence that the Creed has exerted upon the Protestant world the Federal Council has said that it "has become almost as familiar as the catechisms were to our fathers."⁵⁶ The letters of religious social leaders discussed in the last chapter acknowledge the contribution of the Federation to this development. Lewis O. Hartman attested to the widespread significance of this achievement by the organization at the Kansas City Meeting in 1947. He said:⁵⁷

With the exception of the platforms
of some of the minor political parties,

54. See F. Ernest Johnson, Editor, SWC, 124.

55. See Ibid., 122.

56. Social Ideals of the Churches, 3.

57. Reprinted in SQB, February, 1947, 17.

Methodism's Social Creed...was the first comprehensive statement of social principles in this country. Most of the laws limiting child labor and hours of labor for women and all the laws implementing numerous other social, industrial, and economic reforms have been enacted since this creed was first adopted. In a very real sense, the Methodists were pioneers among churchmen in the modern social movement.

2. Cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches

The Federation's contribution to social Protestantism through the Federal Council did not end with the churchwide acceptance of the Social Creed. Much more significant to the Federation than its adoption was its application to historic social crises. Consequently, the Federation was anxious to cooperate in every way with the Federal Council and interdenominationally to prevent having the Creed filed away as merely another church document. It was for this reason that the organization desired to maintain its semi-official relationship with the Methodist Church on the Federal Council. The close association of Ward, North, and Tippy in this respect has been suggested. Mention has been made of North's contribution to both the organization of the Federal Council and to its social vision. It was upon his recommendation, moreover, that a full-time executive secretary was appointed to head the work of the Council's

Commission on the Church and Social Service.⁵⁸ Worth M. Tippy served as chairman of the Commission when he was pastor of the Madison Avenue Church in New York City. Harry F. Ward was the figure who more directly represented the social thought of the Federation on the Federal Council. In 1912 he edited the well-received volume, Social Creed of the Churches, for the Commission. At the time he served on the Commission's Committee on Literature along with such other well-known denominational representatives as Walter Rauschenbusch, Graham Taylor, Samuel Zane Batten, Charles S. MacFarland, and Jacob A. Riis. The "Reading Lists" prepared by that Committee on social subjects for ministers and church workers are essentially the same as those prepared in the initial days of the Federation by Ward for the social enlightenment of the Methodist clergy. Pamphlets on social service prepared for young people, men's groups, and other departments of the various denominations by the Commission on Social Service were also written over Ward's signature. Interestingly, the Federation early developed the practice of so formulating its statements for the General Conference of the Methodist Church that they could be submitted at the same time to the Commission on Social Service of the Federal Council for adoption as the official position of Protestantism. Specific reference is made to this policy in the

58. Sanford, OHF, 297-8.

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Minutes of the Federation.⁵⁹ A reading of the annual Reports of the Secretary of the Federation reveals the numerous contributions of the agency to the social program of the Federal Council through the years.

3. "Unilateral" Interdenominational Activities

Besides the social influence it was able to exert upon the social thought and action of Protestantism through the Federal Council of Churches the Federation has participated in innumerable "unilateral" activities with other denominations. The General Conference of 1916 attested to this function of the Federation. After recording the influence of the unofficial agency upon the Federal Council, a sub-committee appointed to report on the activities of the organization said of the Federation:⁶⁰

The Interdenominational Missionary Movement, The Laymen's Missionary Movement, The Missionary Education Movement, The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations...have been influenced and continue to place great dependence upon the commission (the Federation).

The unilateral activities of the Federation for any one period of its history are too numerous to list, much less to discuss. The constant complaint recorded in the Annual Reports of the Secretary was the inability of the staff to

59. See Report of Secretary for Year 1914-1915.

60. GCJ, 616.

meet the demands placed upon it by a variety of church and non-church groups. In an attempt to meet the demands of the early teens the secretary was forced to spend most of his time in the field and to leave the routine office work and preparation of the Bulletin to the associate secretary. The increasing demands of the last half of the second decade became so numerous, however, that both Secretary Ward and Associate Secretary Grace Scribner were required to spend much of their time in the field, leaving the office responsibilities to part-time stenographic help on many occasions. Grace Scribner's successors, Winifred L. Chappell and Helen Grace Murphy carried on in similar fashion. As a matter of fact, the many requests for the services of the executive secretary motivated the Ad Interim Committee in 1944 to make provisions for the employment of an editor of the Bulletin so that the executive secretary would be free to take advantage of the many opportunities offered the Federation to take its message to the field. At present McMichael spends much of his time speaking and organizing in the field.

One could select at random from among the Annual Reports of the Secretary to survey the innumerable contacts of the Federation outside of Methodism. They all record the same story of lecturing, conducting on-the-scene surveys of difficult social situations, and writing for numerous journals and courses of study. By way of illustration, one

might select the Report of 1917 as typical of the lot. Conveniently, Ward usually included in his Reports a section on the field work engaged in by the staff. The 1917 Report indicates that during the year the secretary gave four lecture courses at the Ford Hall noon meetings, at the Y.W.C.A. National Training School, Union Theological Seminary, and Garrett Biblical Institute; eight series of addresses before groups including the National Religious Education Association Convention, the Sagamore Sociological Conference, and the Chicago and Boston Training Schools; and forty-one single addresses before such bodies as the National Free Religious Association (Unitarian), Christian Socialist Fellowship, New York State Sunday School Association and numerous colleges and missionary conferences. In addition to these activities Ward spent every Sunday speaking once and sometimes twice at open forums, Y.M.C.A. meetings and churches. The Report adds that one hundred ten invitations from interdenominational summer conferences, Chautauqua, state and sectional Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. conferences, sectional missionary gatherings, civic and open forums, the Chicago Sunday Evening Club and City Club, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Country Life conference, a series of conventions for Laymen's Missionary Movement, series of conventions for Canadian church social service and social workers groups, and many others had to be declined. Besides these many

endeavors several regular courses and seminars on different aspects of social service were prepared for various inter-denominational courses of study on social service.⁶¹ The Report for 1918 records a similar schedule of activities, plus a note on the work of Grace Scribner who taught at two Y.W.C.A. conferences, spent four weeks speaking in conferences for general secretaries of the Y.W.C.A., and represented the Federal Council's Commission on Social Service at the National Women's Trade Union League Convention.⁶² Such betokens the opportunities prevailed upon by the Federation to influence the social conscience of all Protestantism. It is reasonable to assume that many of these seeds fell on fertile ground.

E. Impact Upon Society At Large

Obviously any line of demarcation that is made between the impact of the Federation upon Protestantism and society at large is mainly one of convenience for purposes of discussion. The influence of the Federation has gone beyond that of the circles of organized religion itself. It is apparent that it would be impossible for one to trace precisely the lines of influence of the Federation with regard to the social progress that has been made during the

61. Minutes.

62. Ibid.

present century. Yet there is evidence to indicate that the Federation has helped to leaven the lump. The brief account that follows is meant merely to be suggestive of the general pattern.

For purposes of discussion, one might safely say that the Federation has exerted an influence upon society at large through the wide distribution of its Bulletin and other educational propaganda, through the literary contributions of its membership to the secular press, and through the various social-action projects of its individual members. A study of the Bulletin since 1911 discloses that on occasion issues dealing with a social question of special interest for a particular group have been distributed and translated in bulk throughout the world. Excerpts of letters reprinted in the Bulletin from time to time reveal the widespread hearing that the periodical has received. For example, its issue on "The United States and Her Little Neighbors" in the mid-twenties was distributed throughout Mexico, the West Indies, and Central and South America.⁶³ Similarly, some of its special pamphlets were distributed far and wide. Where Our Church Stands on the Social Issue, to mention one, was translated in 1924 by Methodist Missions in Russia into the Russian, Lettish, Esthonian, and Lithuanian languages for distribution throughout the Baltic

63. See SSB, May 15, 1924, 3.

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States and Russia.⁶⁴

More typical has been the distribution of Federation literature at home to the labor and radical press and groups of similar sentiments. During the 1924-28 quadrennium alone, for instance, six thousand copies of the Bulletin were distributed to switchmen in convention; several hundred of a Russian number to a student group at Teachers College; eighteen thousand of the issue on the release of Political Prisoners to organizations interested in that subject; and twenty-eight thousand of a similar number on Communists to other groups interested in civil rights. The labor press during the same period gave generous space to those numbers and two others, one on the Pennsylvania Railroad strike situation and another on Organized Religion and Industrial Reconstruction. In addition to issues of the Bulletin, the Vital Questions Leaflets on "The Open Shop," "Disarmament," "Have You Free Speech?," "Cooperative Homes and Public Ownership" were widely circulated and acclaimed by the non-church world.⁶⁵

The labor movement has constantly benefited from the activities of the Federation. It has both publicized its literature and acknowledged its contribution to the cause of labor. The courageous utterances of the organization in

64. Loc. cit.

65. See Quadrennial Report, SSB, April 15, 1924, 3-4.

behalf of the eight-hour day, the "living wage," collective bargaining, and other radical demands since 1907 have been appreciated by the labor movement. The General Conference of 1916 recorded that the "Labor and Socialistic groups have been influenced and continue to place great dependence upon this commission (Federation)." ⁶⁶ The leadership of Francis J. McConnell a few years later during the steel strike of 1919 verified that conviction. Calling attention to the Evanston Conference of 1926 as "a three-day trial of capitalism," the Federated Press Labor Letter in a release to labor papers throughout the country recalled the work of McConnell in 1919 and designated him as the one "largely responsible" for bringing out the report of the Interchurch Movement on the steel strike "despite the efforts of steel barons and Church magnates to suppress it." ⁶⁷

On the local front the activity of Federation members in industrial disputes and other social crises betokens the impact of the Federation upon society at large. A survey of the section entitled "Local Activities" in the yearly Reports of the Secretary would reveal the numerous activities of alert members throughout the country in every period of the Federation's history. The Report of 1920 disclosed that G. Bromley Oxnam organized a Conference Industrial Relations

66. G.C.J., 616.

67. Quoted in SSB, May 15, 1926, 1.

Commission in Southern California in 1920 to study the industrial situation of that area and to secure and circulate statements from both parties to any local industrial controversy. At the same time he was conducting courses on industry in three local churches. Also on the west coast O. H. McGill was active organizing shingle-making mill-cooperatives and by 1911 had developed five such profit-sharing enterprises valued at about fifty-thousand dollars each. In the Denver Tramway Strike of 1920 the local Social Service Commission took the lead in calling a meeting after the riots that followed which resulted in the organization of a permanent committee, composed of all the religious forces of the city, for investigating the strike. At the request of Christian Century the Federation collected the material for the periodical's special number on the Passaic Strike of 1926. The numerous local activities of Federation members and units during the rash of strikes that broke out in 1928 were so impressive that the Bulletin compiled a list of them in the October 15, 1928 issue. The impact of the Federation upon society in these instances, and they are only suggestive, is apparent if not measurable. It was the cumulative effect of numerous activities such as these by Federation members that eventually resulted in the implementation into the general industrial policy of the nation of such measures as collective bargaining and the eight-hour day, hitherto

considered "radical" ideals.

Less dramatic has been the influence exerted by the Federation upon society through the literary contributions of its staff and membership to secular publications. A mere listing of the voluminous contributions of Harry F. Ward and Francis J. McConnell alone to various periodicals would require pages. One can select at random from among the Annual Reports of the Secretary during their administration; all include a long list of publications which upon request have received articles from the Federation office dealing with such issues as labor, civil liberties, American foreign relations, and so forth. Besides innumerable contributions to some forty or more radical and labor sheets of the metropolitan areas across the country, the list would include an assortment of more familiar periodicals such as the Nation, the New Republic, Asia, the American Review, the Annals of Political and Social Science, and the World Tomorrow. Again, some of the literary efforts of the leaders of the Federation reached an international public. A pamphlet by Francis J. McConnell on the Mexican dispute during the second decade was first distributed by the Latin American Bureau. Similarly, during the twenties Harry F. Ward's lectures in China and Japan were published in booklet form and distributed in the languages of those countries as well as in English. Add to the contributions of these two men the articles of such

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outstanding members as Edward T. Devine, Harry F. Rall, Ernest F. Tittle, G. Bromley Oxnam, Winifred L. Chappell, Grace Scribner, Helen G. Murray, Charles C. Webber, Henry H. Crane, Lewis O. Hartman, and James C. Baker, to name a few, and one can begin to sense the sources of contact that the Federation has had with the general reading public. That these leaders of the Federation have used their literary opportunities to convey the social ideals of the Federation is hardly to be denied; in fact the two are largely identical.

The foregoing is sufficient to demonstrate that the influence of the Federation has overflowed the banks of organized religion itself. An intensive investigation of the impact of the Federation upon society at large would make an interesting and voluminous study in itself. The readiness with which the materials and representatives of the Federation have been received by the secular forces participating in the social struggle suggests that the organization has won their respect as an effective ally; that it has served not only to stimulate the conscience of the church but of society at large.

F. A Question Relating to the Future Influence of the Federation

Prior to its reorganization in 1944 the Federation earned its reputation as an influential organization by and

large as a result of the radical position it assumed in the Christian social movement. Its membership, particularly after its complete denunciation of the existing economic order, was recruited largely on the basis of its radical program. In adopting this policy in the thirties the radical leadership of the Federation was well aware that it would mean the loss of many liberals. Numbers were sacrificed for the sake of principle. It was this policy that threw the Federation to the front of the modern Christian social movement -- its "spearhead," as it has been called. Much of its social influence, as the author's survey indicated, has stemmed from this forward position.

Today the reorganized Federation clings conscientiously to the same radical program as proclaimed in its masthead. At the same time it has broadened its program to include the promotion, not only of the economic phase of the new social order, but also of cooperatives, the racial question, rural life, and so forth. This expansion of the program has more than quadrupled the membership. To date the organization has clung tenaciously to its radical program, as the "red" attacks hurled against it readily testify. Nevertheless, looking toward the future, the relevant question is raised whether the Federation shall be able to maintain its radical position. More precisely, in view of the rapid growth of its membership, will the radical line of

the organization continue to determine its membership or, conversely, will the membership in time determine the line? Is the terrific upswing of membership the result of the radical line of the Federation or its broadened program? The present trend would seem to suggest the latter. Largely through the organizing energy of McMichael many individuals with a special interest in cooperatives, reclamation of rural life, or social justice for the Negro have been brought into the membership. Such members are not necessarily proponents of the radical program proclaimed in the masthead of the Bulletin. In time, as stipulated by the new Chapter policy, these groups will be represented in increasing numbers on the Executive Committee, the policy-determining body of the organization. Is it not justifiable, therefore, to perceive that eventually the membership, in contrast to the radical line, will be incisive in determining the program of the organization, which, in effect, would tend to be a less progressive one? History will record the answer.

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the use of the word "and" in the English language and the use of the word "and" in the Chinese language. The study is based on a sample of 100 English sentences and 100 Chinese sentences. The results of the study show that the use of the word "and" in the English language is more frequent than the use of the word "and" in the Chinese language. This is because the English language is more complex than the Chinese language. The Chinese language is more concise and direct. The English language is more verbose and indirect. The Chinese language is more logical and systematic. The English language is more emotional and subjective. The Chinese language is more objective and factual. The English language is more flexible and adaptable. The Chinese language is more rigid and inflexible. The English language is more creative and imaginative. The Chinese language is more practical and realistic. The English language is more abstract and theoretical. The Chinese language is more concrete and empirical. The English language is more speculative and hypothetical. The Chinese language is more descriptive and explanatory. The English language is more prescriptive and normative. The Chinese language is more descriptive and explanatory. The English language is more speculative and hypothetical. The Chinese language is more descriptive and explanatory. The English language is more prescriptive and normative. The Chinese language is more descriptive and explanatory.

ABSTRACT

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For more than forty years the Methodist Federation for Social Action has sought to apply the principles of Christianity to the problems of the social order. In pursuance of this task the organization has occasionally encountered much opposition. Recent accusations hurled at the agency have evoked controversy as to the organization's value to the denomination. What is required at this time is an understanding of the role that the Federation has played in the development of the social conscience of Methodism.

The Federation, unlike other denominational social-action agencies, has maintained continuously an unofficial relationship to the Methodist Church. This status has enabled the agency to develop a radical program that at once sets it apart from the other denominational agencies. Moreover, its inspirational, non-executive function has enabled the Federation to exert an influence upon the church that has helped immeasurably to procure for Methodism the reputation of being the denomination most influential in promoting the social gospel in America. It is the purpose of this investigation to indicate the significance of these distinctive characteristics of the agency both for Methodism and for American Protestantism generally.

Part I presents an historical background of social thought and action in Methodism against which to view the

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organization of the Federation in 1907. It traces the social forces operative in the founding of the organization. Chief among these were the social impact of John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival, the industrialization of America following the Civil War, and the maturity of the social gospel movement about the turn of the century.

For Wesley Christianity was essentially a social religion. Stressing adult conversion and ethical perfectionism, he and his associates made a strong impact upon the miners and the industrial masses. The principle of individuality embodied in the Evangelical Revival stimulated many social changes in England including factory, prison and franchise reform, the abolition of slavery, and catholic emancipation.

In the process of transplanting Methodism from industrialized England to undeveloped America much of its social influence was lost. In the soil of the westward frontier movement, however, Methodism found itself again. Its belief in the common dignity of man became the democratic gospel of the westward movement. The rapid growth of the church and the schism in 1844 weighted Methodism down with a profusion of internal problems. Its social vision faded and to the fore came an overwhelming emphasis on individualistic evangelism directed at the rural masses.

The post-Civil War transformation of America from an

agrarian to an urban culture had profound significance for the church. Passive at first to the predicament of the industrialized masses, the church was gradually stimulated by the competition of the labor and socialist movements to revitalize its social message. The result was the social gospel movement. In Methodism this development was expressed primarily in the institutional-church movement. The limitations of this program led progressive Methodists at the turn of the century to feel that social service in the future would be required to contribute more fully than formerly to the reconstruction of the social order itself. It was in the interest of this more mature social service that the Methodist Federation was founded.

Part II of the investigation treats the development of the periodic emphases of the Federation. During its organizational period the immediate goal of the agency was to have every church formulate a constructive program for serving the social needs of the community. Its long-range goal was the establishment of a new social order founded upon the principles of the Kingdom of God and social justice.

The gradual transfer of its community-service program to the Board of Home Missions during the second decade enabled the Federation to pursue more directly its long-range goal. Vigorous demands were made for a shorter work-day, a living wage, collective bargaining, and a six-day

week as essential means to the larger objective of complete industrial democracy. The unanticipated involvement of the nation in the European war deflected the Federation from this program to a consideration of the nature, causes, and consequences of war. Following the war increasing attention was given to the issues of disarmament, imperialism, nationalism, militarism, and world cooperation. The reactionary frenzy of the post-war period, reflected in the persecution of social liberals and radicals, rallied the Federation to a stubborn defense of civil liberties.

Throughout the apparent prosperity of the twenties the agency had warned of an impending economic disaster. The collapse of 1929 convinced the Federation that the heart of the problem of realizing the ideal society lay in the economic order. Discovering how that order might become Christian in its form, motives, end, and spirit was designated as the major emphasis of the depression era. Simultaneously a fresh demand for social action in the face of crisis appeared. In 1933, with no abatement of the depression in sight, the Federation moved to an all-out attack on capitalism. The Federation dedicated itself to the abolition of the profit-system and the establishment of a classless society based on mutual service.

The Federation responded to the aggressions of Italy, Germany, and Japan by adopting a policy of economic non-

cooperation toward the aggressor nations. The policy called for the sale of the means of defense to the attacked nations. Varying attitudes within the membership, however, forced the agency to abandon this policy in 1940 in favor of an acceptable one calling for a defense of the improved living standards already gained and the rights of minority-groups. This program, coupled with its demands for a planned democratically-controlled economy, constituted the war-time policy of the Federation for the duration.

The retirement in 1944 of Harry F. Ward and Francis J. McConnell raised the immediate question of the wisdom of continuing the organization. Its periodic financial struggles and the attacks it had endured because of its radical program had taken their toll. Nevertheless, the membership voted emphatically to continue the organization in its present form. Jack R. McMichael, the present executive-secretary, was elected to office that same year. Distinctive among the contributions of his administration have been the organization of local-chapter units to stimulate social action on the grass-roots' level and the broadening of the scope of interests to include new emphases upon social education and action in the South, ethnic democracy, and rural reclamation.

Part III of the investigation demonstrates the uniqueness of the Federation and its significance. Of first

importance is the unique relationship of the Federation to the Methodist Church. Its unofficial status explains how it has been able to maintain its radical program. The experience of the Federation would seem to indicate that this status is the most effective solution to the problem of espousing the revolutionary dynamic of Christianity within a conservative institution.

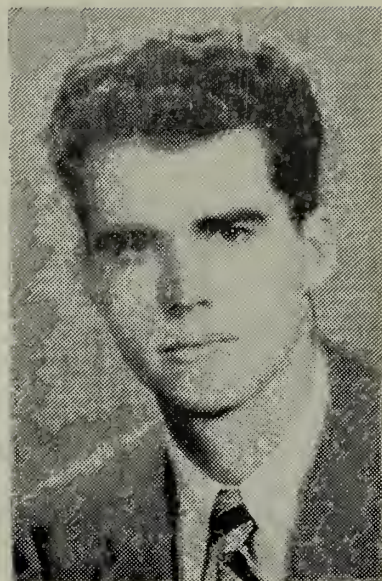
The radical program of the Federation is in itself another unique characteristic. To spearhead the social thought and action of the church has been a cherished function since its founding. Its formulation of the Social Creed in 1908 placed the agency at the fore of the Christian social movement. Since that time the Federation has closely guarded its pioneering reputation.

The other distinctive attribute of the Federation is the degree of influence it has exerted. A survey by the author suggests that Methodism has been the denomination most influential in promoting the social gospel in America. There is ample evidence that the Federation has in good measure been responsible for this achievement. Methodism has continuously relied upon its unofficial agency to permeate all its appendages with the social message. The social impact of the agency upon American Protestantism generally is also readily discernible. Moreover, the readiness with which the work of the Federation has been

received by secular forces participating in the social struggle suggests that the agency has served not only to stimulate the social conscience of the church but of society at large.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Milton John Huber, Jr. was born on July 27, 1922 in Baltimore, Maryland, the first of two sons of Milton John and Elizabeth Marguerite Huber. He received his public school education in Baltimore County, attending the elementary school in Arbutus and graduating from Catonsville High School in 1939.



His freshman year the author attended Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. Transferring at the beginning of his sophomore year, he received an A.B. degree (cum laude) from Western Maryland College in 1943. In 1946 he graduated from Boston University School of Theology with an S.T.B. degree (cum laude).

From 1943 to 1947 the author was a staff-member of the Huntington Y.M.C.A., Boston. In 1947-48 he served the Christ, Lambert's Cove, and Edgartown Methodist Churches on Martha's Vineyard Island, Massachusetts. Since June, 1948, he has been pastor of the First Methodist Church in Mystic, Connecticut.

In 1948 the author married the former Ruth Isabel Miles, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Fred E. Miles who serve the Methodist Church in Westfield, New Jersey.

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